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RAYMOND HAMMER

Japan's Religious Ferment

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Christian Presence Amid
Faiths Old and New

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General Introduction



CHRISTIANS are being presented by the contemporary world with what is, in many ways, a unique opportunity of demonstrating the Gospel. Scarcely less unique is the opportunity being offered to them of discovering in a new and deeper way what that Gospel is. Those are large claims. Can they be justified?

What is this unique opportunity? At the very least it is the opportunity presented to Christians to demonstrate the fundamental truth of the Gospel that it is a universal message, whose relevance is not limited to any one culture, to any one system of thought, to any one pattern of activity. That is by no means the truism that it may appear to be. For more than four centuries the expansion of the Christian Church has coincided with the economic, political and cultural expansion of Western Europe. Viewed from the standpoint of the peoples of Asia, and to a growing extent from that of the peoples of Africa, this expansion has been an aggressive attack on their own way of life. Quite inevitably the Christian faith has for many in these lands been inextricably bound up with this Western aggression. But it has also to be admitted quite frankly that during these centuries the missionaries of the Christian Church have

commonly assumed that Western civilization and Christianity were two aspects of the same gift which they were commissioned to offer to the rest of mankind.

This assumption was sometimes quite conscious and was explicitly stated. More often it was quite unconscious and would have been indignantly denied. But in neither case are we called upon to judge our fathers. Their sincerity can hardly be disputed. Their self-sacrificing devotion finds its monument today in the world-wide diffusion of the Christian faith, the existence, in almost every country of the world, of a community of Christians recognizably part of the Universal Church.

What we are called upon to recognize is that in the world of our time there is a widespread revolt against any form of domination by the West. Nations whose political independence was only achieved 'yesterday' or is only about to be achieved 'tomorrow' can be excused for having their own interpretation of the past, an interpretation unlikely to coincide with that which is prevalent in the West. This very waning of Western influence is in part our Christian opportunity. We are freer today than we have ever been to serve the Gospel without the risk of confusion between that Gospel and the 'power' of the West.

But that is not all. The peoples of Asia and Africa, in their revolt against domination by the West, are presenting a specific challenge to the Christian faith. In what does this consist?

There are three main ingredients in this challenge.

First there is a critical evaluation of the Christian

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religion which rejects it as something inherently Western, as something which fails to correspond to the *felt* needs of Asia and Africa. Christianity is, in such judgement, altogether too Western in its character and in the form which it assumes in its local manifestations. This rejection is the more serious in that Asian and African peoples are themselves, like us in the West, confronted by the bewildering demands of the modern world. All the old landmarks are disappearing. Everywhere there is a desperate search for some inner basis of security, some inner assurance which can enable men and women to face the storm. In the sequel, particularly in Asia, but not only there, the peoples of these countries are seeking to find this psychic security by digging deep into their own past. This is at once an expression of their revolt against the West and one explanation of the resurgence of the great ethnic religions. Further to this it is to be noted that in a new way these ancient religions are becoming themselves missionary. No longer content to be on the defensive, they are offering themselves as answers to the questionings of mankind.

Here is a situation which is new. Only once before, and then in its earliest centuries, has the Christian Church had to face a comparable challenge to its claim to meet the deepest needs of man's heart and mind. The devotees of Mithras, the mystery cults of the Mediterranean world, the Gnostics in that earlier day were serious competitors with the message of the Gospel. Their appeal failed. There followed the long thousand years during which Europe was isolated from the rest

of mankind and built for itself its own peculiar civilization. Then suddenly, drawing on its inner dynamism, a dynamism closely related to its faith, the European world overflowed its narrow boundaries and began its great expansion. For a time it appeared as if nothing could arrest this expansion. It is of some importance to recognize that it is by no means certain that anything can! The scientific view of the world, with all its implications about human survival, is Western in origin. Communism and nationalism are Western concepts. It may well be doubted if anything can arrest the advance of all mankind towards something like a common civilization – if common destruction is avoided. Nevertheless there is, at the moment, a significant pause in the impetus of Western expansion in its Christian expression. The challenge to Christians is precisely this that the ethnic religions, as well as secularist philosophies of life, are offering themselves as the basis of the new world civilization. Both deny the relevance of Christianity.

The *second* challenge follows from the first. Can the Christian faith not only prove its ability to meet the deep human needs of our time but also make peoples of different cultural backgrounds feel at home in the new world? This is a more complex task than would appear. For it is part of our paradoxical situation that, at a moment when the world is becoming so obviously interdependent, every nation in it is seeking to assert its own independence. And religion and culture are the means by which independence is asserted. Has the Christian Church got a Gospel to meet this situation? We may put

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the question this way – can the Christians of the West accept the fact that the expression which Christianity will receive in its Asian and African forms may well be, almost certainly will be, in many respects very different indeed from what we know in the West? That again could be worded as follows – are we of the West prepared to trust the Holy Spirit to lead the Christians of Asia and Africa, or must a controlling Western hand be permanently resting on the Ark of God? Let no one imagine that those questions will find an easy or unanimous response from Western Christians.

There remains a *third* challenge. The Christian Church has not yet seriously faced the theological problem of ‘co-existence’ with other religions. The very term seems to imply the acceptance of some limitation of the universal relevance of the Gospel. Can that be accepted? It can hardly be doubted that the answer must be ‘no’. Are we then shut up to the alternative of what in some disguise or other must be an aggressive attack on the deeply held convictions of those who live by other faiths than our own?

This projected series of volumes has been designed to express a deliberate recognition of the challenge outlined above and to suggest that there is a way in which they can be met without any betrayal of the Gospel – indeed in deeper loyalty to that Gospel’s real content.

First of the demands presented to us by this understanding of the contemporary world is a *glad* acceptance of the new situation in which the Christian faith can everywhere be distinguished from its past historical association with Western political, economic and cultural

aggression. Here is the 'great new fact of our time', every whit as great a fact as the existence of the Church in every land. Here is our great new opportunity, even though it may well be an opportunity to witness through suffering. The Cross, after all, was not a symbol of imperial domination but of the *imperium* of sacrifice. The Christian faith has nothing to lose by suffering. In and through suffering it can perhaps speak home to the hearts and minds of suffering mankind better than in any other way.

Second of the demands upon us, to march with our gladness, is a deep humility, by which we remember that God has not left himself without witness in any nation at any time. When we approach the man of another faith than our own it will be in a spirit of expectancy to find how God has been speaking to him and what new understandings of the grace and love of God we may ourselves discover in this encounter.

Our first task in approaching another people, another culture, another religion, is to take off our shoes, for the place we are approaching is holy. Else we may find ourselves treading on men's dreams. More serious still, we may forget that God was here before our arrival. We have, then, to ask what is the authentic religious content in the experience of the Muslim, the Hindu, the Buddhist or whoever he may be. We may, if we have asked humbly and respectfully, still reach the conclusion that our brothers have started from a false premise and reached a faulty conclusion. But we must not arrive at our judgment from outside their religious situation. We

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have to try to sit where they sit, to enter sympathetically into the pains and griefs and joys of their history and see how those pains and griefs and joys have determined the premises of their argument. We have, in a word, to be 'present' with them.

This is what is meant by the title of this series – *Christian Presence* amid Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism. . . . This will not be an easy approach. But then the love of God is not easy.

The third volume in this series introduces the reader to a veritable laboratory of religions. That Japan today constitutes just such a laboratory will not be disputed by anyone who is at all familiar with what has been happening in that country since the end of the War.

In some ways the task confronting the author has been more difficult than in either of the previous volumes dealing as they did with the worlds of Islam and Hina-yana Buddhism. Both Maha-yana Buddhism and Confucianism have, over the centuries, had a profound effect upon the culture and patterns of Japanese life. Yet neither seem to have made a successful capture of the religious consciousness of the Japanese people. Widely separated peoples have for all their differences found a common household of faith in the Dar al-Islam. Hina-yana Buddhism, far from being confined to Ceylon and Burma and Thailand, is making serious claims to offer a creed for all mankind. But the 'Kami Way', the quintessence of traditional Japanese spirituality, as this volume shows, is something which perhaps only a Japanese can appreciate.

Japan's Religious Ferment

From the very outset the people of Japan have been willing to accept and absorb influences from outside their islands, but their underlying pattern of thinking about the unseen world has remained unchanged. To understand how the Japanese thinks about religion it is therefore indispensable to consider the history of religion in Japan. The early chapters of the book are concerned with this history. The end of the second World War, however, brought a major crisis into the life of the Japanese nation. Its disastrous issue threw all the elements of Japanese life into a melting pot. The result is an almost baffling confusion. But in the laboratory of Japan today a nationwide effort is being made to bring order out of chaos. This calls for the utmost sympathy. For what is happening to one of the ablest nations in the world, as scientifically competent as it is artistically unrivalled, cannot but be of very great importance to us all, and invites our understanding. This volume is a contribution to that understanding. The author, the Rev. R. J. Hammer, has been in Japan for ten years, long enough to have got below the surface, but not so long as to be unable to see the trees for the wood!

Hitherto the impact of the Christian Faith upon the religious consciousness of Japan has been slight, though not negligible. It is already present there with the presence of Christ. A distinguished Japanese professor of Kyoto University, Dr Keiji Nishitani, has recently stated that

In the present age Christianity is encountering the Orient, and a most profound and far-reaching encounter is seen

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within this country. Therefore, I think that it is quite natural to expect Christianity in Japan to make a bold start in another new, unprecedented development.

To be 'present' in Japan is for Christianity as great an adventure as any which it faces today, and, as this volume will show, it is an adventure which will make very great demands upon the will and the imagination and the perseverance and the love of the people called Christians.

M. A. C. WARREN

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Foreword



IN welcoming delegates to the Ninth International Congress for the History of Religions, which was meeting in Tokyo in the autumn of 1958, H.I.H. Prince Takahito Mikasa, the Emperor's youngest brother, made reference to Japan as 'a living laboratory and a living museum to those who are interested in the study of the history of religions'. He proceeded to explain briefly the complexity of the Japanese religious scene, and the problems confronting anyone attempting to translate or interpret Japanese religious vocabulary and experience, pointing out that atmosphere rather than theological nicety carries the day. This volume has taken the title *Japan's Religious Ferment* as an indication of the complexity of Japan's religious life and of constant movement within the laboratory of which Prince Mikasa spoke. Some would speak of Japan as a Buddhist country, yet analysis of the real situation shows that that is but one facet. Others would deny the name of religion to what is seen in Japan, and suggest that temples and shrines alike are little more than museum pieces. A closer examination would show that the emphasis should be rather placed upon the word 'living'. The *Yomiuri* newspaper took a poll on religious belief in 1953, and the figures published were that more

than 95 per cent have a 'family religion' – that is, some traditional affiliation; that 65 per cent had a religion of their own, whilst 35 per cent professed to have no religious belief. Within this last group, however, about one in seven stated that he thought religion was necessary or that he would like to have faith in some religion, although at present without any. Anti-religious feeling is strongest among the student groups or in the trade unions, although the impact of the religions is still strong, whether in their moral influence or in their social and political impact. The survey further showed that there was slightly more personal religion in the towns than in the country – not that the country was more irreligious, but that its expression of religion was more conventional and so largely corporate or social in its expression. Those who accepted religion were asked of the nature of their alignment, and 52 per cent claimed to believe from the heart, whilst 42 per cent accepted ritual or custom. Here there was a slightly higher proportion of personal conviction on the part of women as against men, who were more bound by convention. The majority of high-school students showed an aversion to Buddhism, and of all questioned only 43 per cent accepted the immortality of the soul – with the salaried and working classes showing by far the greatest scepticism.

There is a profound interest in religion even on the part of those who profess to have none of their own, but they find themselves confronted with such variety of religious expression that many feel that mere subjectivism determines the criterion of truth. A Japanese

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agnostic sociologist points to the problem in the use of our very terms.

‘Do you believe in the existence of God?’

He would reply, ‘What do you mean by “God”? And what do you mean by “existence”?’ For some would mean by ‘God’ the Absolute, whilst another will think of an ‘ancestor’ or ‘hero’. The Christian Church recognizes that God has been there as the ‘prevenient One’ before ever the Church began her mission in Japan; she recognizes, too, that she bears the Gospel in earthen vessels. From a Christian standpoint, too, the very word ‘God’ is one that baffles all attempts to give it adequate definition. It is conveniently written with a capital ‘G’ when we wish to denote the God of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, whom Christians acknowledge and worship: but the word is much more than a mere name. It is a symbol in which much Christian doctrine is summed up, for the Being of God is the presupposition of all our thinking and not something towards which we progress. All is involved in our understanding of ‘God’ – for St John reminds us that knowledge of God involves a walking with Christ and a dependence upon him, which, in turn, involves a life of obedience to his words. When we use the word ‘god’ or ‘gods’ (with a small letter), it would at first appear that we are speaking of some object (or should one say ‘one other’?) or objects that are not God – and one might then go on to point out that to speak of ‘gods’ is to speak of non-beings. At one time there was a tendency to feel that the ‘god’ or the ‘gods’ of the non-Christian world were either nonentities or demonic

powers, but few would now fail to accept the fact that adherents of non-Christian religions are confronted with the true and living God of the Christian faith and worship. In that case 'god' or the 'gods' would not necessarily describe objects other than 'God' – but would indicate (from the standpoint of the Christian understanding of the truth) a mistaken or an inadequate view of the ultimate reality, which we indicate by the word 'God' and for which we must use the language of personality as the highest category of our speech. But here a further caveat becomes necessary, for the Christian, too, is limited in his apprehension of the truth, even though he confesses through faith that there is finality in Christ. He is also unable adequately to express that which he has apprehended, so that even the use of the word 'God' is no guarantee that we have dismissed the 'god' or 'gods' of our own creating. It should, therefore, be with humility that the Christian turns to look at the religious experience of others, to seek for the convenient revelation of God himself – realizing that only in God can the Japanese live and move and have their being. In Japan's religious ferment there is much that speaks to the Church of God, and the Church, in turn, is called to speak a word from God to the other religions.

The scheme of this volume is simple, seeking first to examine the elements at play within the laboratory, and, next, to discover what particular, qualitative contribution they have made to the Japan of today. The mediaeval alchemists sought to find the Philosopher's Stone, which would turn all to gold. We may well ask whether this is

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not the goal of the search within the religious laboratory of Japan – for the stone is at the same time the elixir of life. And the Christian Presence will speak, in all humility and in all sincerity, its conviction that Christ is the agent, the basis and the goal of all.

*Christ is the End, for Christ is the Beginning:
Christ is the Beginning, for the End is Christ.*

The Ethos of the Laboratory

Fundamental Attitudes



THE Christian is concerned to transcend nationhood and yet at the same time to affirm it. He believes that God 'made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth' (Acts 17.26), but yet believes that this is God's world and that there is point in human history. The God he worships is not the deity of Deism, far removed from the historical process – but One who is 'preserver' as well as 'creator'. Whilst, therefore, it is right and proper to ignore at times so-called particularist elements in the Japanese tradition and not to accept the premise that they, as a nation, are completely and utterly different from every other nation (an assumption which Japanese so readily believe about themselves), yet it is still possible to posit that, in the providence of God, Japanese history and the progress of Japanese thought and spirituality do have a particularist element. The Old Testament prophets would be the first to affirm that nationhood is 'of God' and not all 'of men'. We shall, accordingly, work upon the assumption that it is possible to discover a distinctive ethos about Japan's religious aspirations. The fact that there is a laboratory at all, in

which many complex elements have been at work, is itself a pointer to a measure of distinctness.

As writing was introduced from China through Korea only in the fifth century, and the oldest historical material extant dates from the early eighth century, Japanese history begins for us less than two thousand years ago with the Yamato clan gradually spreading its influence from the western island of Kyushu. The home of origin of the diverse racial elements is somewhat confused, and it is certain that a diversity of traditions and religious practices were added to those of the Ainu, who had settled Japan in pre-historic times – but the early history speaks of the attempt to gain unity out of confusion. Already we can see the importance of the leader and the devotion with which he is regarded by his followers. Throughout Japanese history there is a portrait gallery of striking personalities, and whether the leader was the secular ruler, the founder of a Buddhist sect, or the *Kyōsō* (founder-teacher) of a New Religion, he has always had a fascination for the masses.

Professor Nakamura of Tokyo University has suggested that there are three particular approaches to life which have conditioned the Japanese way of thinking, and, because they all have relevance for Japanese religions, we shall consider them. He would judge them to be responsible for 'the almost complete secularization of religion in Japan'.¹

The first of these is the naturalistic view of life, which

¹ H. Nakamura, 'Some features of the Japanese way of thinking', *Monumenta Nipponica*, XIV (1958–9), p. 277.

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involves a deeply rooted affirmative attitude to nature and material things. The ethos is one of expression rather than repression, the acceptance of absolute values within the phenomenal world, involving an emphasis on immanence rather than transcendence. Human desires and sentiments were to be accepted, and instead of a more rigorist Buddhism changing this pattern, Buddhism was itself forced to be more affirmative and even frankly hedonistic. As we shall see (Ch. 3), the Pure Land sects of Buddhism were particularly developed in Japan; these rebelled against the traditional Buddhist asceticism. There was no Manichaeian dualism about Japanese thinking; the natural and the supernatural are not things apart, and so disciplines which mortify the flesh are considered unnecessary. Japan could not accept the ethos of India.

The second is the spirit of tolerance. The impression that one gets of ancient Japanese society is that there were few deep-seated antagonisms and that the community was fundamentally in harmony within itself. Even criminals were not roughly treated, and capital punishment was not practised for three and a half centuries of the Heian period.¹ It was because of this spirit of tolerance that the Japanese were loath to accept the Jesuit missionaries' teaching on eternal damnation. They found it difficult to visualize the possibility of being beyond deliverance through eternity. Amida Buddhism taught of grace reaching into the nethermost

¹ This began with the establishment of Kyōto as capital in A.D. 794.

hell; Shinran taught the salvation of the sinner. Shōtoku Taishi (573–621) held that there was no innate difference between the saint and the most stupid of men – and so opened the way for the Shinshu gospel, which saw no merit in the ascetic life. This same tolerance has encouraged syncretistic elements and a comprehensiveness on the part of Japanese Buddhism. The belief of the common people was so deeply rooted in their native Kami,¹ that Buddhism could only advance by accommodation and Shamanistic elements were adopted within Buddhism. The Japanese, says Dr Nakamura, 'are by nature inclined to rapprochement without thrashing out an issue'.² Just as Japanese became devoted followers of the Buddha without giving up their native religion, so no inconsistency is seen in the fact that there are widespread aspects of Christian culture in modern Japan, although actual Christians number less than one per cent of the population. Of course, Buddhism itself had already shown its tolerance and accommodating spirit in its travels from India through Central Asia and China to Korea and Japan. In both cases it is coupled with a relativism, which denies absolutes. A Japanese proverb declares that 'there are many paths up Mount Fuji', indicating thereby that there is no single route to the summit of perfection and truth. Dr Kato quotes the following poem expressive of this truth:

*By routes diverse men may the mountain climb,
Each path presenting different views sublime –*

¹ See note 'The Meaning of Kami', appended to this chapter.

² Op. cit., p. 300.

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*But when to the proud summit they do rise,
The self-same smiling moon doth greet all eyes.*¹

Such tolerance should lead to universalism, one would think – but the particularism of Shinto, which led the Japanese to think of themselves as a ‘chosen people’ meant that the universal was appreciated in reference to some particular. There could be no generality without a specific frame of reference to accompany it. We shall see how sectarian Shinto introduced a more universalist strain into the more nationalist interpretation of ‘election’.

The accommodation which arose out of tolerance led to what Prince Mikasa referred to as the emotional approach to religion without dogmatic niceties. A modern story can illustrate where such an attitude can lead. ‘The last time I saw you I said that I was a Shintoist, but I should have said that I am a Buddhist’, exclaimed an eager young Japanese to his foreign friend. Then he added with a somewhat embarrassed smile, ‘I really don’t know what I am; I guess I’m both.’²

The third fundamental to which Professor Nakamura alludes is the absorption of foreign cultural elements. This readiness to absorb what is foreign really springs from Japan’s basic tolerance. When the foreign culture is adopted it is not held in juxtaposition as a continuing foreign element, but becomes a constituent element of the Japanese culture with the exception that the absorp-

¹ *A Study of Shinto*, p. 214.

² Quoted in *Contemporary Religions in Japan*, I, p. 78.

tion is often uncritical and not too thorough-going. The criticism is sometimes levelled by the Japanese themselves that this leads to a flippancy even in serious matters, where something foreign is concerned, although the basically indigenous is treated with the utmost seriousness. Opinions differ as to the extent of the synthesis achieved. There may be occasions when a marriage of convenience between cultures has taken place – whilst often the external elements will be accepted, but not the inner essence which had given significance to those externals in the alien culture.

Intuitiveness is a conspicuous characteristic of most Japanese religions – and of Japanese Christians too! Because intuitions are linked with the depths of the subconscious, it follows that Japanese inwardness would lead to a pragmatic stress on experience rather than to the working out of fully-reasoned theological principles. Immediacy, not deduction, would be the demand. Ontology is hardly a pursuit within the Japanese religions.

And intuitiveness leads on to a propensity for introspection, and the desire within the religion to achieve a changed attitude of mind. A religion of positive thinking can often emerge from this tendency. Instead of changing the environmental conditions, the religionist works for a changed attitude towards a continuing environment. For this same reason religion and everyday morality tend to become divorced, as the religion is regarded as being the means of discovering a new meaning of life or the means of achieving harmony with nature. 'Being

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right with the world' would be regarded as a valuable religious experience.

These, then, are the conditioning factors which have, through the centuries, given a peculiar ethos to the laboratory, but it is now our task to consider the ingredients of the experiments themselves, and first we must turn to what has been termed 'The National Faith of Japan'.

* * *

The Meaning of 'Kami'

*Still is there no place
Where divinity is not;
Even the mighty sea,
With its myriad flowing tides
And the rugged mountains, too.*

This simple poem comes from the Izumo Shrine, and presents for us the difficulty of giving a precise definition to the term 'Kami'. The word is often translated by the English word 'god' – yet the concept of deity or divinity is so different from our Christian view that it is far better to retain the actual Japanese word. Dr Holtom gives the following definition: 'Kami in its original setting and genesis is the projection of an emotion that was aroused by a multitude of widely differing events in the primitive environment, and . . . the intensity and uniqueness of this emotion are the grounds on which an adequate cause of the emotion is inferred to exist in the stimulating object or person or event. . . . Kami is fundamentally a

word that points to a "holy" or "sacred" world of separate events, believed to be filled with mysterious power and under certain conditions with benevolence'.¹ There is a possibility that the word originally expressed 'Ka-ness' – where 'Ka' was the primitive ejaculation in the presence of the eerie or unknown. The sound 'Ka' is still used in a Japanese sentence to express a question, and so 'Kami' may have expressed whatever aroused a sense of questioning or wonder.

The 'Kami' pervaded the whole of life, and so the word is used to denote a whole variety of objects, animate and inanimate – the mountain peak, the rough stone, the mysterious fox, the lightning flash, the mystery of growth and fertility, the brooding spirits of the departed, etc., etc. The 'Kami' is no absolute being, even though bit by bit the concept may have been refined, so that some writers can speak of 'Kami' as linked with 'Kagami' (mirror), the source of light and glory. The universe comes alive with spirituality.

¹ D. C. Holtom, 'The meaning of Kami: III', *Monumenta Nipponica*, IV (1941), pp. 391–2.

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A Survey of Shinto



SOME Japanese writers have referred to *shintō* as the religion of the Japanese from 'time immemorial' and have spoken of it as that which kept the soul of Japan alive, being the guardian of Japan's nationhood. Despite the changes in external conditions, the inwardness has remained – 'There is one thing that has remained unchanged, and that is the soul of Japan'.¹ Yet the word *shintō* is not even a Japanese word. It was coined from the Chinese characters meaning 'way' and 'god', and so it is commonly translated as 'The Way of the gods'. The fact, however, that the Japanese meant by 'god' something different from our understanding of the term would suggest that it is preferable to preserve the original Japanese word 'Kami'. The term *shintō* was coined at a time when Japan was experiencing the full impact of Buddhist teaching and culture, and was used to express the native faith in contradistinction with the new import. Even so the very use of the character 'way' reflects the influence of Chinese Taoism, for which the 'Way' was central.

¹ S. Arima, 'The soul of Japan', *Contemporary Japan*, V (1936–7), p. 70.

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The use of the word *shintō* can be misleading if it is then assumed that there is a set form of organized religion with established doctrinal standpoints. Shinto has no positive doctrine and no clearly defined pantheon. Dr Ono says that 'it is impossible to make explicit and clear that which fundamentally by its very nature is vague' and that 'there are still many matters that are not clear even among Shintoists'.¹

Foreign writers have tended to treat Shinto in a somewhat superior fashion, dwelling largely upon its primitive elements and suggesting that its survival was an indication that Japan, as a nation, had not yet matured. A somewhat supercilious attitude was particularly marked at the end of the nineteenth century and the early part of this present century, when the influence of Spencerian ethics and the evolutionary approach to the science of religion was extremely strong. Sir Charles Eliot writes: 'It is strange that this ancient ceremonial paganism should have survived among an unusually intelligent and progressive race. It is not even artistic, for it worships no images. . . . It has no moral code; its prayers and sacrifices aim at obtaining temporal prosperity and indicate no desire for moral or spiritual blessings. . . . So primitive is the thought of Shinto that it is hardly correct to say that natural features or individuals are deified. They are simply accepted as important facts in the continuous national life. . . .'² Aston's approach to Shinto was fundamentally antiquarian, and he felt that

¹ S. Ono, *The Kami Way*, Tokyo, 1960, p. 8.

² C. Eliot, *Japanese Buddhism*, 3rd ed., pp. 180-1.

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it would be rejected *qua* 'primitive cult'. 'It is difficult', he writes, 'to augur a great future for Shinto. Especially when stripped of Buddhist and Chinese accretions, it is far too rudimentary a cult to satisfy the spiritual and moral wants of a nation which has, in these latter days, raised itself to so high a pitch of enlightenment and civilization. It cannot for a moment compete . . . with its great rival, Buddhism. And now Christianity is also in the field.'¹ The Christian, however, is concerned to posit finality rather than superiority, and desires to meet with men as men and to understand their basic religious consciousness; he does not necessarily assume that an uninhibited and direct expression of desires and innate hopes and fears is *ipso facto* inferior to a more sophisticated approach, which can still contain within itself the basic root of idolatry – a paganism far more pagan than that which is so nonchalantly condemned.

What, then, is Shinto? One definition speaks of it as 'the characteristic ritualistic arrangements and their underlying beliefs by which the Japanese people have celebrated, dramatized, interpreted and supported the chief values of their national life'.² The weakness of this definition would be that it assumes Shinto to be entirely an indigenous religion. Just as there are differing racial elements in what we know as Japan, so the religion of the Japanese came from various sources, and Shamanistic and animistic practices present in Shinto are also to be

¹ W. G. Aston, 'Shinto', *Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society of London*, VII (1908), p. 349.

² D. C. Holtom, *The National Faith of Japan*, p. 6.

found in other areas – and particularly in Korea and north-east Asia. The geographical conditions within Japan itself meant a strong measure of regionalism, and the unification of the country did not lead to a complete unification of the religion, even though those elements which belonged to the traditions of the Yamato clan, from which sprang the Imperial family, gradually gained the ascendancy. The oldest written records are the *Kojiki* (712) and the *Nihon Shoki* (720), and they both incorporate several variant forms of the traditional mythology, thus suggesting different developments in different parts of the country. The former work ('Records of Ancient Matters') is written in Japanese, using Chinese characters phonetically, and is probably truer to the actual situation of the matters it relates. The latter work ('Chronicles of Japan') is written in Chinese and incorporates more of Chinese tradition and Chinese expression. It is primarily an apologetic work, whose concern is to show the antiquity of the Japanese Imperial family and its divine mission upon earth. According to these documents there was a long mythological period called 'The Age of the Kami', following which the grandchild of the goddess Amaterasu-Ō-mikami descended to the lower realms, and his great-grandson, the Emperor Jimmu, became the first Emperor. The date given is 660 B.C., and, until Japan's defeat in 1945, whilst the Age of the Kami was accepted as mythical, everything from 660 B.C. was accepted as historically accurate – despite the fact that writing was not known in Japan for a thousand years subsequent to that supposed

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date. Jimmu is held to have unified the Japanese nation, and to have set the pattern of government under the protection and leadership of the Kami. Present-day Japanese historians would date the emergence of the Yamato clan to the first century B.C. or A.D. and regard the unification of the country as a gradual process which was probably not completed until the sixth or even the seventh century A.D.

Whilst primitive Shinto embraced cults of diverse origins, the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon Shoki* indicate a growing assimilation, and Holtom's definition is accurate, if one considers Shinto as a living and developing cult religion. The *Kojiki* begins by accounting for the host of celestial deities which are presumably supermundane, but there then appear numerous deities, regarded as celestial beings but associated with earthly functions. Izanagi and Izanami appear as the great male and female progenitors, through whose union creation and a host of other gods and goddesses come into being. Aston suggested that they are simply a reflection of the Yin and Yang of Chinese philosophy, but they seem far more than mere loan deities in the records. However, when Izanagi brings Amaterasu-Ō-mikami (the Sun Kami) into being, she takes pride of place – undoubtedly because she was the chief deity of the victorious Yamato clan. With the growth of an ancestor cult (which does not seem to have been an original part of Shinto), she came to be revered as the ancestress of the ruling house, and the shrine of Ise, dedicated to her, took precedence over all others, even over the oldest centre of Shinto worship

at Izumo. As the Emperor came to be regarded as the symbol of the nation, so the Ise shrine came to be regarded as the national shrine. Originally men approached the Kami through a shaman, who was usually a woman, and for this reason the Empress was a personage of importance in ancient Japan, and young women still perform the sacred dances at the shrines, which are performed before the *shintai* (or symbol of the Kami). Originally the rites were very simple and were performed at natural shrines (such as sacred trees), but gradually priestly families were formed to perform the more elaborate rites in the constructed shrines, although there still exist shrines which are little more than entrance halls, as at Omiwa, where the mountain to the rear is regarded as the dwelling of the Kami, or is itself Kami. This latter is a survival of the stage of nature worship, where the whole of phenomena is looked upon as animate and the divine presence is to be seen everywhere and worshipped accordingly. The fact that shrines are commonly erected in places far removed from the rush and clamour of daily life is an indication of the desire for communing with nature. Man, however, cannot commune with the Kami in his impurity and so ritual purity is stressed. The hands and mouth are washed on approach to a shrine, indicating purity in action and word. The petitions made to the Kami are commonly for everyday necessities – and the very rice of the field is itself a participant of the Kami nature. There are also the prayers for the warding off of calamities, but the note which marks the shrine ritual and the *norito*, as

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contained in the *Engishiki* (the book of ritual, which was compiled from 905 and presented at the Imperial court in 927), is one of trust rather than of fear. The Shrine Festival is an occasion of communal joy, when the community under the protection of the Kami express their corporate gratitude.

The shrine may be called the palace of the Kami, who may be any one of the *yao-yorozu no kami* (literally, eight million Kami), of whom the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* speak, or of a more recently enshrined Kami. The Japanese word for shrine originally meant the spiritual dwelling-place of a Kami, but today it includes the buildings, the grounds and all associated facilities. There are a great number of shrines which are set apart for *uji-gami*, or 'clan Kami'. An *uji-gami* is a Kami which was worshipped in antiquity by a clan. The clan which was knit together by ties of kinship had both the privilege and the responsibility of worshipping its particular *uji-gami*, and the shrine of such a deity was called *uji no jinja* (shrine of the clan) or *uji-gami no yashiro* (shrine of the clan Kami). The movement of population has changed the original concept, so that the *uji-gami* has come to be the tutelary deity of a particular area. The people who participate in this common worship at the local community level are known as *uji-ko*. When the *uji-ko* (child of the clan) attends the shrine, he does not go to receive any instruction, nor to participate in corporate worship, as it would be understood in the West. He simply recognizes an innate relationship between himself, his community, and the Kami, in

whose care his life is placed. At one time only the actual members of the clan could participate, but this limitation was removed in the last century. The influence of ancestor worship meant, of course, that the *uji-gami* came to be regarded as the ancestor of the local leader. The worship contributes towards a feeling of solidarity.

The religious ceremonies are very simple and revolve around reports of significant events in the life of the individual or community, thanksgivings and prayers. Offerings were customarily of grain, fruit and vegetables, and at times uncooked fish and fowl. Blood was never permitted, as blood pollutes, and so animal sacrifice would have conflicted with Shinto notions of purity. This abhorrence of impurity is seen in the attitude towards birth and death. Births would take place in special parturition huts apart from the community, and one looked upon death as tragedy, and the dead body as impure.

One of the commonest symbols of Shinto is the mirror. Mythology links it with the reflection of Amaterasu-Ō-mikami, and it was one of three symbols which she bestowed upon her grandson, when he was sent to the earth – the other two being the sword and the jewel. Ninigi-no-mikoto was told to honour and worship it as 'her spirit'. As a result it has become the sacred symbol (*shintai*) of many shrines – and notably of the Grand Shrine of Ise. The significance of the mirror has been variously explained. One mediaeval Shinto scholar stated that 'the mirror hides nothing. It shines without a selfish mind. Everything good and bad, right and wrong

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is reflected without fail. The mirror is the source of honesty. . . .'¹ Another interpretation is that it emphasizes the truth that man and the Kami are co-terminous, because in the mirror man sees himself! And as man sees himself, so he sees the need of *makoto* (inner truth or sincerity), which involves 'gratitude to all things, respect for all things, living with a sense of humility towards all things.'²

But Shinto worship also comes into the home through the medium of the *kami-dana* (Kami-shelf), which is the shrine in the home of the worshipper. It is customary for amulets from Ise Shrine, the shrine of the tutelary deity, or of the shrine usually worshipped to be placed there. Each morning and evening offerings of food are made at the *kami-dana*, which may also contain memorial tablets of deceased relatives. A devout Shinto worshipper, after ceremonial ablutions, would bow before his shrine, clap his hands twice, and bow again for a moment in silence. United in spirit with the Kami he goes off to work.

The fact that Shinto's origins were forgotten made it easy for it to be considered as an indigenous faith, and for the link with nationalistic ideas to be established. Whilst the use made of the Imperial legend during the fifty or sixty years before the War was a new development, it did come out of the thinking of mediaeval Shintoists. Chikafusa Kitabatake (1293-1354), author of

¹ Chikafusa Kitabatake in *Jinnō Shōtōki*, written in 1339 (quoted in S. Ono, *The Kami Way*, p. 23).

² *An Outline of Shinto Teaching*, p. 20.

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The Records of the legitimate Succession of the Divine Sovereigns, wrote:

Japan is the divine country. The heavenly ancestor it was who first laid its foundations, and the Sun Goddess left her descendants to reign over it for ever and ever. This is true only of our country, and nothing similar may be found in foreign lands. That is why it is called the divine country.¹

This type of thinking was also present in the writings of the National Scholars (that is, students of the ancient Japanese Classics), who brought about the Shinto Revival at the end of the eighteenth century and exerted a strong influence on the movement which led to the restoration of the Imperial power in 1868. Leaders in this revival were Mabuchi Kamo (1697–1769) and Moto-ori (1730–1801). The latter says of Japan: 'Our country is the source and fountainhead of all other countries and in all matters it excels all the others.'² The beginnings of Tennoism can be seen in the following passage:

Our country's Imperial Line, which casts its light over this world, represents the descendants of the Sky-Shining Goddess. And in accordance with the Goddess' mandate of reigning 'for ever and ever, coeval with Heaven and earth', the Imperial Line is destined to rule the nations . . . as long as the universe exists.³

The solidarity in faith and tradition led to the conception of the whole nation forming one *uji*, although

¹ Quoted in *Sources of the Japanese Tradition*, ed. Tsunoda, London, OUP, p. 274.

² *Sources of the Japanese Tradition*, p. 523.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 523.

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the Confucianist stress on filial piety was incorporated in the assertion that the relation of the nation to the Emperor was that of child to parent: 'The Japanese Empire is a huge family, and the people are tied by close blood-relationships into a tight spiritual unity.'¹

Another Shinto apologist held that,

The national experience of the Japanese and the will of the gods are one and identical . . . the Japanese race was placed on earth as a realization of the life of the gods and is possessed of their divine attributes.

He goes on to interpret the Shinto Pantheon:

Amaterasu-Ō-mikami represents fully in Her person all the gods of Shinto . . . when we pray to the Sun Goddess, all the other gods manifest themselves to us in Her heavenly and superhuman attributes. . . . The Tenno represents in his person the divine ancestors and at the same time the unbroken line of the Imperial Family to be perpetuated for all ages. He is the source of power which gives eternal life to his subjects and has himself eternal life. . . . The Tenno is the object of worship . . . as a personification of the deities. He . . . represents . . . everything the nation has been and will be. . . . Thus are polity and religion identified in Shinto, and it is this identification . . . which explains the unique solidarity of the Japanese nation.²

In earlier writings Kakehi thought of Shinto as an all-inclusive world religion, stating that 'Shinto is the faith at the basis of all religions'. He seized upon the first deity named in the *Kojiki* – Ame-no-Minaka-nushi-no-

¹ Chikao Fujisawa, 'Japan versus Marxism', *Contemporary Japan*, I (1932-3), p. 448.

² Katsuhiko Kakehi, 'An outline of Shinto', *Contemporary Japan*, I (1932-3), pp. 584-5, 587, 589, 596.

Kami ('Lord of the centre of heaven Kami') – and identified this Kami with the great life of the Universe, holding this deity to be both transcendent and immanent. Hence Buddha, Confucius, Lao Tse and Jesus Christ are all called missionaries of Shinto! This deity, however, is not even mentioned in the *Nihon Shoki*, whilst the *norito* make no reference to him either. Kakehi even went on to establish a Trinity, with Amaterasu as the 'visible historical incarnation' of the second Mi-Musubi-no-Kami, another of the original Kami of creation, mentioned in the *Kojiki*. Amaterasu is the means whereby worship can be offered to the invisible Great Spirit of the universe. But the Emperor is her earthly representative, being 'god revealed in man'.¹

The pre-war attempt to turn Shinto into a super-religion, incumbent upon all, was accompanied by the specious argument that there was no religious observance involved in shrine worship – but for the ordinary man the shrine was what it had always been, whilst Sect Shinto preserved customary practices and beliefs. Nevertheless from 1900 the shrines were declared to be non-religious institutions. This move was facilitated by the fact that from the Meiji restoration the hereditary priesthood had been abolished and the priests were made government officials, with their appointment being the responsibility of a government department. Thus Shrine Shinto became synonymous with State

¹ The influence of modern philosophy is obvious in modern Shinto apologists. Hasegawa says that Hegelian and Bergsonian philosophies are particularly used in the expounding of Shinto: N. Hasegawa, 'Modernism in Japan', *Contemporary Japan*, V (1936–7), p. 67.

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Shinto until the disestablishment of State Shinto with the post-war occupation. This has enabled the shrines to revert to their former religious purpose, although there are many who would regard the dichotomy between church and state as something which is untrue to Shinto belief and tradition. A recent Shinto publication states:

So-called State Shinto is founded on the idea that the prosperity of the nation, the safety of the Imperial House, and the happiness of the people are blessings given when human politics coincide with the will of the gods; this train of thought was an honest spiritualism which treated preferentially the problem of the gods. This was called *saisei itchi*, or unity of religious rites and politics. . . . The term *Kodo* (Imperial Way) was used to designate the State Shinto system by which ideal politics is to be conducted in the spirit of *saisei itchi*.¹

The use made of this theology of life in pre-war nationalism was undoubtedly an unjustifiable one, but the principle itself was a witness to a conviction latent in Shinto that life must not be departmentalized, and that sharp lines of distinction between the sacred and the secular must not be drawn.

¹ *Basic Terms of Shinto*, Tokyo, Association of Shinto Shrines, 1958.

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Buddhism in Japan



IN the year 552 the ruler of a small Korean kingdom sent an embassy to Japan, seeking military aid, and among the gifts he sent were a statue of the Buddha and some of the Buddhist scriptures. He stated that the religion of the Buddha was the greatest treasure he could send, and recommended the faith to the Japanese Emperor. Japan had already been receiving the impact of Chinese thought and culture, and elements of ancestor worship had already been accepted as part of its native Shinto – and, although the new faith was treated at first with superstitious awe, the country was in a receptive mood towards continental ideas. At first Buddhism was presented in a general fashion with emphasis on its moral doctrines and the power of its Buddhas in times of crisis, and only in the next century did sectarian divisions arise. The early sects of the seventh and eighth centuries (now called the Nara Sects, and which no longer have much following in Japan) were strongly foreign, and made no attempt to adapt themselves to Japanese culture or the needs of the common people. The architecture of their temples was Chinese; the rites and the services were

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conducted in Chinese – and so the impact of the religion was limited to court circles, where the continental learning was in vogue. Notable, however, was the new constitution, which was put out by Shōtoku Taishi (572–621), the Prince Regent from 593, and which, whilst involving Confucian ideas,¹ relied upon the Buddhist religion to enforce its new provisions. Shōtoku Taishi is often looked on as the founder and establisher of Japanese Buddhism. He certainly gave a strong impetus to the faith, building monasteries (of which Horyuji still survives), studying and lecturing on the sutras and writing commentaries on them. He also emphasised works of compassion – establishing dispensaries for the sick and poor, and also for animals.

The Buddhism introduced was, of course, Maha-yana (the Great Vehicle), of which Wisdom and Compassion were the two great foundation pillars. It is supposedly further removed from primitive Buddhism than Theravada Buddhism (called Hina-yana – the Small Vehicle – by the northern school), because the Sakyamuni (*Shaka* in Japanese) of Maha-yana is not so much a historical personage as a super-human Buddha, specially incarnate, whilst the Maha-yana sutras mainly date from the first century A.D. – long after Sakyamuni's death. None the

¹ A writer has pointed out that 'Japanese society submitted to the dictates of Confucian ethics even before being thoroughly indoctrinated with Buddhist concepts' (T. T. Brumbaugh, *Religious Values in Japanese Culture*, London, Kegan Paul, 1934, p. 57). Buddhism, on its introduction to Japan, was closely tied in with Chinese culture, which itself embraced Confucian and Taoist ideas, and the religion and the culture were not disassociated.

less, seeds of Maha-yana Buddhism were undoubtedly present in primitive Buddhism – although the more individualistic approach of Hina-yana has given place to a universalism in Maha-yana, where all have the possibility of Buddha-hood and the Bodhisattva (*Bosatsu* in Japanese) is the ideal. Whereas the Arhat of Theravada Buddhism strives for his own freedom from the chains of Karma and for his enlightenment in Nirvana, the *Bosatsu*, though qualified for Nirvana, renounces it to lead all other sentient beings to Buddha-hood.¹

The comprehensiveness of Maha-yana Buddhist philosophy was to be introduced by Saichō (commonly called by the title 'Dengyō Daishi'), 767–822, who founded the Japanese *Tendai* Sect. Buddhism assumes the basic unity of all existence despite apparent diversity. The fundamental nature of all Dharmata – whether external to us or within us – is the same. Everything partakes of the Buddha nature. Law is basic to existence, and the order of truth is expressed in the law of causation. The Ultimate is seen as a conformity with the very laws of existence, and this notion of conformity is also seen in the ideal of Buddha-hood (*Tathagata*; which means 'thus come'). The name used implies that he who has attained to the truth is existence; he is absolutely conformed, and there is no inner contradiction between his ego and the ultimate truth. Being conformed to the Truth, he has not only gained it for himself, but is in a position where he can communicate it to others. But the permanence of

¹ For a more detailed analysis of Hina-yana, see G. Appleton, *On the Eightfold Path*, London, SCM Press, 1961.

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Truth is in contrast with the perpetually flowing stream of this-worldly existence, which is the reason for the illusory character of phenomena. There is accordingly the possibility of two different interpretations of the same Truth – on the one side the premise of the permanent stability of Ultimate Law as an external existence, and, on the other, the subjective approach which regards Truth as existing in our own mind. Tendai accepts those sutras in which Sakyamuni is made to repudiate both extremes and take a Middle Way between realism and idealism, between 'being' and 'non-being'. For Tendai the Lotus Sutra was most important, for it also presented a synthesis of the tension between the historical and the ontological – the Buddha as a historical being and as a metaphysical entity. Change involves a challenge to a realist position, and the rule of causation involves a stress on 'becoming' over against a static approach to 'being'. But a rejection of permanence does not lead to nihilism: there is still a reality in external things and processes. There is *movement* towards a goal – where the goal is identical with what ultimately has been and what *is*. The imperfect manifestation must give place to the reality of the basic nature which underlay the manifestation.

A Christian may here compare the definition given to 'faith' by the author of Hebrews where it is said to be the fundamental substratum, which gives meaning to hope, and makes possible a confidence in what is as yet unseen (Heb. 11.1).

The real meaning of existence is said to be seen in the Buddha, and the real world finds its mouthpiece in him,

because he embodies the fundamental nature of the cosmos. One might even speak of him as the key to all understanding – for the universe itself takes on meaning as its nature is realized in him. In him the general and the particular are wed; in him ‘the full light of universal truth and the all-embracing communion are realized’.¹

The Christian can find here a real point of dialogue with the Buddhist, as he is convinced of the centrality of Christ for any understanding of the world or human life. Christ is at once the basis of life (cf. John 1.4; Col. 1.16–19); he is also *adam* (‘man’) – the ‘proper man’, as Luther calls him. Humanity only takes on its true nature, as it is ‘in Christ’.

Tendai philosophy, as introduced by Saichō, was both comprehensive and eclectic. He tried to embrace seemingly contradictory sectarian teachings, leaving the choice of the way of salvation to the individual, who could either look to himself or to the mercies of Amitabha, the Buddha of Boundless Light. Saichō was ready to preserve the seeming contradictions, and would doubtless have said that religion cannot always respond to the rules of logic, and that Buddhism too could be allowed to have its paradoxes! It was not that he wished to give an amalgam of whatever beliefs he could find, but that he believed in the possibility of an inner harmony. His approach would seem to be syncretistic, but he was simply continuing in the Maya-yana tradition, which had first absorbed the Hindu Pantheon into itself,

¹ M. Anesaki, *Nichiren, the Buddhist Prophet*, Harvard University Press, 1916, p. 153.

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granting full citizenship to the Indian gods in the Buddhist paradise, and then, in China, absorbing elements of Confucianism and Taoism. Now in Japan the whole Shinto pantheon became incorporated. Dengyō felt that 'Tathata' ('suchness') revealed itself in every religion. Had he known Judaism, Christianity and Islam, these, too, would have been incorporated – as all would have been for him revelations of the one *Dharmakaya* (the Absolute Law Body) – the Ultimate in Buddhism.

But Dengyō's approach was not only academic; he was concerned to emphasize that the *Bosatsu* finds his own happiness in the happiness of his fellow-beings and that he is to impose on himself any sacrifice or privation which would lead to the well-being of his neighbours or bring them nearer to salvation. Practical charity and brotherly love were to be the marks of the monastic community he established on Mount Hiei outside Kyoto – even though the actuality proved to be far different from the founder's intent. By making Tendai serve practical ends, Dengyō once more adapted Buddhism to the Japanese spirit, which is far more pragmatic and less interested in pure theory. Buddhism was now seen as a religion with a social impact – and it was not surprising that he came to be regarded as a reincarnation of Shōtoku Taishi.

During this same period *Shingon*¹ Buddhism, which

¹ '*Shingon*' means 'true word', but the original Sanskrit word means 'a magic formula' and so the title may indicate the esoteric character of this sect's teaching.

was more of the Lamaistic variety, was brought to Japan by Kūkai (commonly known as Kōbō Daishi) (774–835). He had first been instructed in Confucianism and influenced by Taoism, but was converted to Buddhism in 798. Like Saichō, Kūkai studied in China, but concentrated on the Shingon teaching, and particularly on its esoteric teaching (called *mikkyō* – ‘secret teaching’ – in Japanese). On his return, he established a monastery on Mount Kōya, and the sect came to exercise the strongest influence of any on the mediaeval court.

If Tendai speaks of comprehensiveness, Shingon points to the mystery of life and the importance of sacramentalism. It is the most syncretic form of Buddhism and Kūkai is often given the credit for the establishment of Ryōbu-Shinto, the fusion of Buddhism and Shinto, which was to become the feature of Japan's religious life. Shingon involved a combination of mysticism and occultism. Deities and demons from the various traditions were interpreted as manifestations of one and the same Buddha – Maha-Vairochana, the Great Illuminator (*Dainichi* in Japanese). When free from illusion, the believer can discern the body and life of Dainichi in anything (including the stirrings of the individual consciousness). Vairochana is regarded as the true spiritual Buddha – a Being so high that Sakyamuni ‘was not worthy to be his cowherd’.

Mystery is at the heart of the universe and the worshipper is able to come to grips with reality through the medium of symbols and ritual. Kūkai produced two mandala which gave a symbolic representation of the

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cosmos – the one representing the realm of indestructibles, the ideal or potential oneness, and the other representing the Womb World, where there is a constant struggle and only dynamic manifestation. The mysticism of Shingon had a wide popular appeal – and the magical side passed into everyday religion. Kōbō Daishi himself was regarded as being a great *Bosatsu* and the representative on earth of *Maitreya*, the Buddha of the future – the coming Saviour!

With the arrival of Tendai and Shingon, Buddhism had really established itself in Japan, and the influence of the priestly hierarchy was considerable in the politics of the Heian Period. The link with politics did lead to strong inter-sect rivalries and even religious fratricide, but the Christian who is cognizant of 'religious wars' in so-called Christendom is hardly in a position to point out that Buddhists did not live according to the fundamentals of Buddhism!

Yet, despite the fact that Buddhism had moulded the culture of Japan and had come to be regarded as a national religion – even though the wider promulgation of the faith meant that it had to modify its teaching and incorporate the Kami of Shinto into its system – it was still hardly a popular religion. It had come to be the religion for the Imperial family and the aristocrats – and a priesthood, derived largely from the aristocracy, performed its rites on behalf of the aristocracy in temples constructed by them. In addition, the difficulties of Buddhist practice had been so stressed that Buddhism

seemed to be a religion for the priests, and the ordinary person could not hope for anything more than a certain measure of material happiness as a reward for gifts to the temples.

The Buddhism of the Kamakura Period is an entirely different thing; it is the religion for the new military caste and for the common people as well. It would not be inaccurate to call the age one of religious revival, and the sects which arose in that period – the Pure Land Sects, the Zen sects and Nichiren Buddhism – are still the most vital in Japanese life. For these sects Buddhism is not a matter of cultural refinement or taste, or even a means to happiness; it is concerned with the fundamentals of life, and each of the sects points to the importance of faith as the way to salvation.

Pure Land (Jōdo) Sects

The leaders of the Pure Land Sects emphasized elements that had already been present within the comprehensiveness of the Tendai teaching, but the emphasis of certain aspects to the exclusion of others meant the creation of an almost new kind of Buddhism. Hōnen (1133–1212) was concerned with the question of salvation and sought to show that it was available to all. The final aim of Buddhists had been to achieve the state of the self-enlightenment of the Buddha, but the ordinary man, no matter how many times he might be reborn into this world, was impotent to attain the goal of the Ultimate. If he was to attain 'Suchness', help from outside was a *sine qua non*; *tariki* (external strength) comes in

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where *jiriki* (one's own strength) has failed. Now certain of the sutras had referred to an Amitabha Buddha – the Buddha of Boundless Light and Infinite Life – to whom even Sakyamuni was considered to have borne witness. He was the great embodiment of Compassion – the Lover of mankind, man's Protector and man's Refuge. The way for the common man lay with Amitabha's (called *Amida* in Japanese) eighteenth vow, which went as follows:

Upon my attainment of Buddha-hood, if sentient beings in the ten quarters, who have sincerity of heart, hold Faith, and wish to be born in my land, repeating my Name, perhaps up to ten times, would not be born therein, then may I not obtain the Great Enlightenment.

As a result of the transfer of his merit, it was possible to join Amida in his Pure Land. Hōnen taught accordingly that rebirth in the Jōdo of Amida depended solely upon the recitation of the words '*Namu Amida Butsu*' (commonly called the 'Nembutsu') – 'Honour to the Buddha of Boundless Light' – the very repetition of the name being an indication of faith in the compassion of Amida and in his ability to save. At the time of his death Hōnen issued the so-called 'One-Sheet Document' which summarized his teachings:

The method of final salvation that I have taught is neither a sort of meditation . . . nor is it a repetition of the Buddha's name by those who have studied and understood the deep meaning of it . . . but a mere repetition of the name of the Buddha Amida, without a doubt of his mercy. . . .¹

¹ *Religions in Japan*, ed. W. K. Bunce, p. 80.

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Shinran (1173–1263) was a disciple of Hōnen, and established what came to be called the 'True Pure Land Sect' (Jōdo Shinshu). He carried out the logical implications of Hōnen's teaching – preaching a doctrine of '*sola fide*' and so opposing the asceticism of traditional Buddhist monasticism. Not only was the priest free to marry, but there was no need to observe dietary rules; rules and regulations involved the possibility of a 'salvation by works'.

One of the Shinran's descendants, Rennyo (1415–99), who was a popular preacher, expressed this truth as follows:

Not by priesthood, not by asceticism, but by faith alone one will be saved. Through faith and faith alone one can live in his Light. He is ignorant who, knowing the whole sacred literature, does not know of the faith; he is learning who, unable to read even a syllable, has faith in him. All the people, high and low, learned and ignorant, priests and laymen alike, enjoy an equal right before the Lord.¹

For Shinran not even the uttering of the '*Namu Amida Butsu*' was an essential; it was the commitment of faith which was all-important. And Amida is the only object of faith: other Buddhas may be respected, but they are never to be worshipped. Salvation is through Amida alone, and never through one's own efforts. Sakyamuni's injunction to 'work out your own salvation' is entirely ignored – and is even accounted unorthodox!

Because of his emphasis on 'salvation by faith'

¹ J. Takakusa, 'Buddhism as we find it in Japan', *Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society of London*, VII (1908), pp. 264–79.

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Shinran paid little attention to ethical demands. He was concerned to say that, no matter how wicked a man is, he can still be saved. Rennyō stressed the importance of ethical demands, but did not make the connection with the religious demand. But by mid-Tokugawa times (that is, the eighteenth century) the two became linked. Little was heard of the wicked being saved; ethical action became the sign of salvation. To commit an evil deed was to demonstrate a lack of faith. The work of everyday life was emphasized as the best expression of religion. Naito quotes a Shinsu Tract:

Be ever mindful of divine protection.
Do not neglect to do your work morning and evening with
cheerful diligence.
Work hard at the family occupation.
Be temperate and do not indulge in unprofitable luxuries.
Do not gamble.
Take a little rather than a lot.¹

The Nembutsu is no longer, as with Hōnen, a means to salvation; it is a token of thanksgiving for the salvation granted through faith. Shinran held that the repetition of the name of Amida without faith was meaningless. The calling must be the result of faith, and not with a reward in view – whilst the faith which is required for salvation is itself the gift of Amida.² Whilst the Pure

¹ K. Naito, *Shukyo to Keizai Rinri*, Shakaigaku, 1941, pp. 275–6. Quoted also in R. N. Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion*, Chicago, 1957, pp. 117–18.

² The Creed of Shinshu runs as follows:

We rely upon Tathagata Amitabha with our whole heart for the Enlightenment in the life to come, abstaining from all sundry

Land may still be thought of as a reality yet to be attained, awareness of the boundless compassion of Amida makes possible an enjoyment of his fellowship here and now, even though the believer is still only a sinner of this world. He is already a Bodhisattva in this life, and has the assurance of his acceptance as a Buddha in Nirvana. Man lives now by faith – but the *satori* (enlightenment experience) is realizable only in the life to come.

But who, we may ask, is Amitabha? Is he the equivalent of the Christian's 'God' – and is the conception of him as Saviour the same as that of Christian soteriology? The emphasis on the faith-relationship in Shin Buddhism has often been compared with Protestant Reformation doctrine – but yet there are basic differences. Shinran still considered himself as belonging to the Buddhist tradition, and modern Buddhist writers will draw comparisons between his writings and basic Maha-yana philosophy. Faith is supreme, and yet it is strengthened with philosophical elements. Shinran accepts the traditional Buddhist Trinity, according to which the Absolute Form pervades the whole universe, and yet is known only in an Accommodated Form here on earth and in a Bliss

practices and teachings, and giving up the trust in our powerless self.

We believe that the assurance of our Rebirth through his Salvation comes at the very moment we put our Faith in him; and we call the Name, *Namu Amida Butsu* in happiness and thankfulness for his mercy.

We also acknowledge gratefully the benign benevolence of our Founder and the succeeding Masters who have led us to believe in this profound teaching; and we do now endeavour to follow through-out our lives the Way laid down for us.

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Form in the presence of the Bodhisattvas. These three are thought to represent reason, activity and emotion from a philosophical standpoint, but are religiously received as a trinity of Wisdom, Mercy and Activity. Amida is identified with the Absolute, but is known in this world through the activity of the Bodhisattvas, whilst the Amida of the western paradise is identified with the Bliss Form.

Does Amida, then, belong to history or only to philosophy? The original story of the vow speaks of him as a man, Hōzō, who lived in the remote past, and who attained Buddha-hood. But a claim to historicity would involve the illogicality that men are supposed not to be able to attain to Buddha-hood by themselves, and yet one man is claimed to have done so. Pure Land theologians, however, are not concerned to press for the historicity of Amida – and it is likely that he is little more than an abstraction whose principle attribute is infinite compassion. 'Through the nembutsu . . . Shinran tried to grasp the whole essence of the Indian Mahayana Buddhism in which the wisdom and the mercy was one.'¹ But for the Pure Land worshipper Amida is more than a philosophical abstraction. He is 'Infinite Light . . . and there is no corner of the human heart where its rays do not penetrate; he is Eternal Life. . . . His vows reflect his Will – the Will as illumined by Infinite Light and imbued with Eternal Life. . . . He is love incarnate.'²

¹ S. Yamaguchi, *Dynamic Buddha and Static Buddha*, Tokyo, 1958, p. 10.

² D. T. Suzuki, *A Miscellany of the Shin Teaching of Buddhism*, p. 3.

Amida, as the source of salvation and the object of faith, would certainly appear to be more than 'the nature of an expedient' or 'a creation of the mind'. It is easy to understand why some would even speak of him as a 'deity of pantheistic monotheism'. Some of the sentiment in Amida Buddhism seems very close to Christianity, and yet there are fundamental differences. In the first place, Amida is never thought of as the creator, and so the problem of evil is different for the Buddhist. Evil belongs to *karma* (the law of interacting cause and effect), and there is no idea of Amida grappling with *karma*, as Christ grappled with evil. Amida simply ensures that *karma* does not prevent a man from entering the Pure Land. Amida is the pure embodiment of love, and there is no idea, such as there is in Christianity, of the reconciling of justice and mercy. A further difference is that Christianity is wedded to history, whereas even Shin Buddhism is basically a metaphysical reconstruction. According to Buddhist thinking, history belongs to the sphere of *karma*, and so reality must transcend the historical, even though the ultimate can be grasped within the world of *karma*. Further, we may note that there is no cross in Buddhism. The Buddhist stresses not the conflict, but the peace. Whereas, for the Christian, suffering does not deny the peace, and the tranquillity is in the acceptance of the suffering, Amida and the Buddhas enjoy a tranquillity in which suffering is to have no part. For Buddhism the road to life and peace does not pass by a cross. Again, whilst there is the idea of a transfer of merit, Buddhism has no idea of atonement.

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Karma must still run its course in this world. For the Christian, however, fundamental to his thinking is Christ's acceptance of the *karma* – he has become 'sin for us'. And the final goal is different, as the Buddhist salvation is always in terms of enlightenment. For to be rid of ignorance means emancipation from the bondage of birth-and-death, and the believer in Amida sees his salvation in the enlightenment which is his at his rebirth in the Pure Land.

Zen

Zen, which claims to be original Buddhism, was brought in from China by Eisai (1141–1215) and Dōgen (1200–53). It looks to the intuitive experience of the truth which Sakyamuni had when he was under the Bodhi-tree, and so *satori* (enlightenment) is the goal of *zazen* (meditation) and the various disciplines of the Zen sects. The founder of Zen was Bodhidharma (died in 528) who came from India to China to introduce what was claimed to be the innermost essence of Buddhism. The profound spiritual awakening to which it aspires involves, as a start, self-knowledge. 'One who has not seen into one's own Nature is not to be called a wise teacher.'¹ The stories of the Zen masters all stress the leap from great doubt to the position of enlightenment, which is tantamount to a conversion experience. Suzuki suggests that *satori* is characterized by irrationality, intuitive insight, authoritativeness, its affirmation, its sense of the beyond, an impersonal nature, a feeling

¹ D. T. Suzuki, *Zen Buddhism*, p. 87.

of exultation and a momentariness. It is a mysticism which is realized through the 'direct insight of profound self-awakening'.¹ And yet there is a total lack of any idea of a personal confrontation: 'There is no romance of love-making, no voice of the Holy Ghost, no plenitude of Divine Grace, no glorification of any sort.'²

Rather than dependence on the sutras, it looks to the personal transmission of the truth from master to disciple, and four principles are traditionally adduced:

1. Because the transmission of the truth is extra-canonical, the truth of Zen is not dependent on a written authority: it is instantly realized and communicated from mind to mind. The very impossibility of transmitting the truth in words means also that an explanation of Zen itself is also untrue to Zen principles; and so –

2. There must be no dependence on words or letters. Zen, we are told, dwells in the midst of the Truth which gives life to the concepts and ideas which may be used, but the two are not to be identified.

3. The search for truth must be within one's own mind, but this is not to identify the truth with rationality. For neither in affirmation nor yet in denial is the truth to be found. 'Nothingness' is not a mere vacuity; it is a positive store-house of being!

4. Finally comes the insight into essential being, and the attainment of Buddha-hood, which spells salvation – for in it is involved the direct apprehension of Truth,

¹ Z. Shibayama, *The Spirit of Zen*, Kyoto, 1958, p. 65.

² D. T. Suzuki, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

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which involves escape from the flux of apparent being and entrance into true being.

Apart from Zen doctrine, Eisai also introduced to Japan the art of drinking tea, which was not unconnected with the quietude which Zen pursued. The 'Tea Ceremony' spread from the Zen monastery to the homes of the warrior class and then to the common people. In archery, too, Zen was to make an impact upon culture.

The differences between the Rinzai teaching, introduced by Eisai, and the Sōtō, introduced by Dōgen, are slight. Rinzai makes use of the *kōan*, or apparently irrational conundrum, which is supposed to open the way to *satori* during *zazen*; the Sōtō group emphasizes the meditation in itself, rejecting the *kōan* because it tends to make *satori* an object of desire. Sōtō is anxious to emphasize the abruptness of the *satori* experience. But, whatever the path, Zen would affirm that through *satori* the believer is brought into touch with the fundamental unity of existence which underlies all experience and all phenomena – and here the Christian cannot but recall the emphasis on immutability in his doctrine of God.

Although Zen claimed to represent most accurately the philosophical standpoint of Sakyamuni, it is likely that it was strongly influenced by Chinese culture – and the aestheticism within Zen is strongly Chinese. Zen monks were also responsible for introducing neo-Confucianist teaching, and the fusion of Zen and Confucianist ethics became the foundation of Bushido (see Ch. 5).

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In the vital Zen tradition there is much for the Christian to learn too. In a modern age of activism the lesson of quietude is hard to learn, and the greater potency of the silence is not always realized. A Roman Catholic scholar-missionary has elaborated:

Present-day man understands again that the tranquillity of meditation is essential for the formation of human personality as well as for the development of society and culture. This tranquillity, which certainly never has been alien to Christianity, pervades Eastern traditions and spiritual inheritances. Many Buddhist monasteries, especially the halls of Zen meditation, in spite of the hustle and noise of city life, which is in Japan just as engulfing as anywhere else, are places of quietude and recollection where concentration on the true inner values is greatly helped. Men who seek this quietude, in turning away from passion and lust, find their way back to spiritual things. The soul is rediscovered and the religious sense for the Eternal and Holy, i.e. God, is awakened. Thus through contact with the forms of Eastern meditation the Christian religion may possibly be enriched and at the same time 'easternized'.¹

Nichiren Buddhism

This is named after Nichiren (1222–82), a dynamic, prophetic figure, who began a movement which is hostile to all other forms of Buddhism, thus showing a militant intolerance, which is a strange exception to the customary tolerance in Buddhism. He had an apocalyptic and messianic message – which has, in this century, re-emerged in some of the strongly-lay New Religions,²

¹ Fr H. Dumoulin, 'The Easternization of Christianity', *Catholic Missionary Bulletin*, Feb. 1959, Tokyo.

² See Ch. 9.

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which have emanated either from Nichiren Buddhism or its splinter groups. Nichiren had been schooled in the Tendai doctrines – as had been the founders of the Zen and Pure Land schools – and he felt that he was recalling Buddhism to its pristine purity. This was embodied, he held, in the Lotus Sutra – and this sutra was proclaimed by him as the gospel of the age. At that time the country was threatened with invasion by the Mongol hordes, and Nichiren preached that Japan's national destiny was dependent upon a return to the teaching of the Lotus Sutra, as interpreted by Nichiren. The calamities of the day were the result, he said, of corrupt religion – and further disasters were prophesied, if Japan did not follow his teaching and accept his version of Buddhism as the State Religion. The way to enlightenment was to repeat the clarion call: *Namu myōhō renge kyō* (Honour to the Glorious Law of the Lotus Sutra). This formula was accounted sufficient to attain Buddha-hood, because in it the soul was held to become identified with the cosmic soul of the eternal Buddha, of whom Sakyamuni had been the historical manifestation. Nichiren also produced a great Mandala,¹ which was to become an object of worship – in which the eternal Buddha and the various historical manifestations (inclusive of the native Japanese Kami) are graphically shown.

Trials and persecution only increased Nichiren's conviction that he was the saviour of his nation, the re-incarnation of *Bosatsu Jōgyō*, the disciple of Sakyamuni,

¹ Unlike the Shingon Mandala, which are pictures, the Nichiren Mandala is a piece of calligraphy.

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who is mentioned in the Lotus Sutra. The fanatical zeal of Nichiren was matched by that of his followers – and during the following three centuries Nichiren Buddhism was at the heart of inter-sectarian strife and rivalries – and was especially attractive to the militant spirit of the unsettled warriors. During the Tokugawa Period (1600–1868) its disruptive influence was not tolerated, but it continued to exercise a strong influence among the bourgeoisie and lower classes. In more modern times his patriotism has inspired the nationalistically minded and his religious fervour has been an encouragement for some towards a whole-hearted commitment to religion – whilst the exclusivism of the Nichiren sects made them the most active of the Buddhists in opposition to the encroachments of State Shinto upon the other faiths. If Shinran's message and standpoint speak of 'faith alone', the activism of Nichiren would say that 'faith without works is dead'.

* * *

The LOTUS SUTRA (Saddharma-pundarika Sutra)

This has been described as 'a magnificent apocalyptic . . . with the universe as its stage, eternity as its period, and Buddhas, gods, men, devils, as the dramatis personae' (W. E. Soothill, *The Lotus of the Wonderful Law*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1930, p. 13). This scripture claims to be the *Ekayana* (the *One Vehicle of Truth*). Sakyamuni, the chief speaker throughout, is portrayed not as the historical figure, but as the Eternal Buddha. The Sutra claims to give his final word, thus superseding all other interpretations of the truth, which had only temporary value and were accommodated to the limitations of the hearers.

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The Mingling of Buddhism and Shinto



ANYONE who attended the annual festival of Kisshoin Village (a few miles from Kyoto) at the Temmangu shrine, would be entertained with a most energetic dance, involving most acrobatic feats, put on by the youth of the village. It would be part of the local Shrine Festival, and so one would expect it to be Shinto in its background. The name of the dance is, however, the *Rokusai Nembutsu*,¹ which immediately links it with Buddhism, and the dance begins with reference to the Vow of Amida and ends with a Song of Dedication, and so we are obviously witnessing a relic of religious rites of a popular character, that came out of the Pure Land tradition. Apart from the main current of the Jōdo tradition, which came from Hōnen and Shinran, there were other schools, in which the practice of the Nembutsu

¹ The name *Rokusai* is taken from the six fasting days of the month on which that particular Nembutsu was to be used. At one time it was used at the Buddhist festivals which marked the vernal and autumnal equinox, when the dance and songs were used to console the ancestral spirits (itself an emphasis which was not part of original Buddhism), to pray for rich harvests and to exorcise epidemics.

(the recitation of Amida's name) was mingled with native religious practices, which antedated the introduction of Buddhism, and was provided with folk-music and dancing. The *Yuzu-nembutsu* school, which was founded by Ryōnin (1072–1132), and the *Jishu-nembutsu* school founded by Ippen (1239–89) display this trend. We are told that Ryōnin set the recitation of Amida's name to music, and sang the Nembutsu to the accompaniment of a bell, whilst Ippen expressed the joy of faith through the medium of dancing. Their message, too, was far more communal than individualistic; the singing of the Nembutsu and the accompanying dance worked for the peace, happiness and prosperity of the village community. It was not so much that Buddhist doctrine was undergoing development as that Buddhism was being subjected to the influence of indigenous Shinto belief and sentiment. The Rokusai Nembutsu is symptomatic of what had happened to Buddhism from the start, and of the acceptance of a syncretic mixture by the vast masses of the population of Japan. Despite the separation of Shinto and Buddhism in 1868 under the influence of the nationalistic tendencies of the Pure Shinto school, 'for the majority of the Japanese people, under the aegis of the State, Buddhism and Shinto, along with Confucian ethics, continued to express functional aspects of what was essentially an undefined and more or less undifferentiated religious faith'.¹

¹ W. P. Woodard, 'Religion-state relations in Japan I', *Contemporary Japan*, XXIV (1956), pp. 466–7.

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This same undifferentiated type of religious faith is still largely the norm – except that there has been a tendency to substitute Christian ethics for what are thought to be ‘outmoded Confucian ethics’. The fusing of Christian ideas is especially marked in the New Religions (see Ch. 9) and the ultra-nationalist, by contrast, is both unfavourable to Christianity, which he considers to belong to the West, and is still markedly Confucianist in his thinking.

Buddhism had come to Japan at a time when the old semi-independent clan system was giving place to a more centralized form of government, and the adoption of Buddhism as the guiding principle of the court policy did not automatically mean the acceptance of the alien faith at the local level. To become a popular faith Buddhism had to induce the belief that it was only another form of the old faith and that acceptance of the new did not involve an abjuration of the old. Buddhism had to make concessions, and one of these was the absorption of the basic optimism which Japan had derived from Shinto. (It may be argued that both religious traditions have been important for Japan, Shinto providing the affirmation, and Buddhism the negation, and that both are needed so long as the synthesis of the affirmation and the denial in Christianity is not yet accepted.) The rapprochement between the two faiths was very much assisted by unauthorized groups within Buddhism (called *ubasoku zenji*), who professed to be Buddhist, but who had retained both the spirit and the function of pre-Buddhist shamanic

diviners.¹ These unorthodox syncretists were very critical of the orthodox Buddhist groups at Nara, whose worship and whose ethos was distinctively foreign. It was only when the Emperor appointed one of the unorthodox group as the Buddhist 'Archbishop' in Nara, that the massive statue of Lochana Buddha could be erected in the Todaiji Temple at Nara. We are told that the Emperor consulted the shrine of Amaterasu-Ōmikami at Ise before the construction of the statue, and that the work proceeded with her blessing, as Vairocana (the Illuminator), the chief Buddha of the sect at Todaiji (Kegon Sect), was to be equated with her (the Sun). The Emperor also sought the assistance of the Kami of the Usahachiman Shrine for his project, and, when he later established a new shrine for the Kami in Nara in 747, the occasion was marked by five thousand Buddhist monks chanting Buddhist sutras. The Kami was 'honoured' with court rank; the Buddhas were, no doubt, thought to be above ranking!

The accommodation of Buddhism is also seen in the erection of shrine-temples and temple-shrines. In the former case, a Buddhist temple was constructed within the precincts of a Shinto shrine; in the latter, a shrine to a local Kami was erected within the Buddhist temple, and the Kami was thought to be the temple's guardian deity and a servant of the Buddha.

Both Saichō and Kūkai are represented as favourable

¹ These Buddhist shamans asserted that their path – the Path of the Holy Man – was the true road to salvation. The *Yamabushi* (mountain climbers) of modern times follow this same tradition; the ascent of the mountain symbolizes the ascent to Buddha-hood.

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towards Shinto, and the latter is often credited with the establishment of Ryōbu Shinto, the theory whereby the Shinto gods were recognized as the incarnations of Buddhas, although a precise doctrinal equation came after his time. It is said that, when Kūkai was looking for a suitable place to establish his monastery, he was guided to Mount Kōya by an old hunter, who was none other than the Kami of the mountain. Another story narrates that he met a lady who said that she was the Kami of the mountain, and had long been anxious to believe the true teaching of Buddhism, but had not yet had the opportunity of meeting a Buddhist. Both these Kami duly have their shrines within the main precincts of the Shingon Temple. In later times (perhaps in the eleventh century) Shingon Shinto was one of the forms the fusion of the two took – with the Shingon doctrine of the two worlds, the metaphysical and the phenomenal, being used to explain the relationship of the Buddhas and the Shinto Kami. The Buddhas belonged to the metaphysical world, but that world was one with the phenomenal, to which the Shinto deities belonged. The absolute is known through its relative forms. Tendai Shinto (also called Sannō Ichijitsu Shinto after the name of the Kami of Mount Hiei, where Saichō established his monastery) arose about the same period, and regarded Sannō as a manifestation of Sakyamuni Buddha. This syncretic theory teaches that, just as Sakyamuni is the chief of all the Buddhas, so Sannō is to be identified with the Sun goddess, the chief of all the Kami; and the reason why Sannō had appeared in Japan was to spread

Buddhism in Japan, to pacify the nation, and to save people in general.

One theory of the relationship of Buddhism with Shinto was the *Honji Suijaku* Theory. *Honji* means 'homeland' and was used to describe the Buddha as a metaphysical being – the fundamental and original reality or source. Sakyamuni, as the historical Buddha, was regarded as the *suijaku* (footprint) – the incarnation of the eternal Buddha – and Maha-yana Buddhism had already left the way open for innumerable historical incarnations of the eternal Buddha. From the standpoint of the Buddhist theorists, the Shinto deities were a further stage removed from reality, being no more than *re-suijaku* (re-incarnations of the historical Sakyamuni). Such an explanation naturally did not meet with the favour of the Shinto priests, and the next way of interpretation was to say that, just as Sakyamuni was the 'footprint' of the eternal Buddha in the revelation of truth to India, so the Shinto Kami are the 'footprints' for Japan. The later Shinto revival saw an attempt to make the Shinto Kami the intermediate link between the *honji* and the historical Buddhas. They would thus be superior to the Buddhas.

For most people, however, the two were accepted together without any attempt to rationalize – and even a Nichiren shows an unquestioning acceptance of the Sun-goddess. People were both Buddhists and Shinto, and came to recognize that the religions were responsible for different parts of human life and experience. Shinto, because of its vigorous world-affirmation, largely had

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control over the affairs of this life, whilst the Buddhist priest took care of the dead. Whether a person looked to becoming a Kami or a Hotoke (Buddha) at death depended largely on the traditional affiliations of the family, but the concepts were not widely different.

Some Patterns of Behaviour

A Study in Japanese Society and Social Relationships



FRANCIS XAVIER wrote from Japan in November 1549, giving his first impressions of the Japanese:

It seems to me that we shall never find among heathens another race to equal the Japanese. They are a people of very good manners, good in general, and not malicious; they are men of honour to a marvel, and prize honour above all else in the world. They are a poor people in general, but their poverty, whether among the gentry or those who are not so, is not considered a shame. . . . They esteem honour more than riches. They are very courteous in their dealings with one another. . . . They are a people of very good will, very sociable, and very desirous of knowledge; they are fond of hearing about things of God, chiefly when they understand them. Of all the lands which I have seen in my life, whether of Christians or of heathens, never yet did I see a people so honest in not thieving. . . . They like to hear things propounded according to reason; and granted that there are sins and vices amongst them, when one reasons with them, pointing out what they do is evil, they are convinced by this reasoning. . . .¹

Japan's first Christian missionary is here pointing to

¹ C. R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan, 1549-1650*, pp. 37-9.

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traits in the Japanese character which are almost continuing features. Alessandro Valignano, who wrote in August 1580, is similarly impressed, but notes, too, a certain unpredictability about them:

The people are . . . courteous and highly civilized, so much so that they surpass all the other known races of the world. They are naturally very intelligent. . . . On the one hand, they are the most affable people and a race more given to outward marks of affection than any yet known . . . from childhood they are taught never to reveal their hearts, and they regard this as prudence and the contrary as folly, to such a degree that those who lightly reveal their minds are looked upon as nitwits, and are contemptuously termed single-hearted men. Even fathers and sons never reveal their true thoughts to each other, because there can be no mutual confidence between them in word or deed. . . . *Japan is another world, another way of life, other customs, and other laws.*¹

What the early missionaries did not appreciate was the fact that religious influences had largely been at play in the making of the Japanese character, and that the social unit rather than the individual was all-important. As we have already noticed, Shinto thought – or perhaps it should be more accurately termed the ethos of Shinto – lay at the basis of Japanese society, but Confucianist thought played an important part too – especially in the feudal era, into which the Jesuit missionaries entered, and which persisted until the mid-nineteenth century. It furnished ‘flesh and blood to the ethical life of the nation’.²

¹ Ibid., pp. 74–6.

² T. Harada, *The Faith of Japan*, London and New York, Macmillan, 1914, p. 13.

Confucianism rarely appeared as another religion, even though its chief adherents did have certain religious attitudes and tendencies. During the Tokugawa Period, Buddhism was very tolerant towards Confucianism, and Confucianist ethical ideas were largely propagated from the Zen monasteries; but stricter Confucianists tended to be somewhat critical of Buddhism. They often looked to Shinto as their religion, and supported the move for the separation of Shinto from Buddhism which finally took place in 1868. Similarly the stricter Shinto adherents came to look to Confucianism for philosophical depth, as they were loath to draw upon Buddhism, Shinto's strong rival in the laboratory. The attitude of Confucianism towards Buddhism reflected the social distinctions of the time, for Confucianism was largely responsible for the training of the Samurai class, whilst the common people looked rather to the Buddhist sects which had arisen in the Kamakura Period, and it was natural that the Samurai should be a little contemptuous of the masses and their religious beliefs. (A modern parallel would be the attitude of philosophical Buddhism or agnostic scientism towards the New Religions or institutional Buddhism, which claim the masses!)

But Confucianism, as an ethic and a sociology, certainly exercised an influence far beyond the Samurai class. Its influence can be seen in the strict establishment of relationships within the whole community and the enforcement of certain fundamental rights and responsibilities that derived from these relationships. There were five such basic relationships – that between a Lord

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and his Retainer; that between a Parent and a Child; the Older Brother or Sister link with the Younger Brother or Sister; that between Husband and Wife; and that between Friend and Friend. Within these relationships there are conventional ethical patterns; and at times an apparent amorality is due to the fact that there is no pattern of reciprocity.

The Feudal Period naturally emphasized the Lord-Retainer relationship, where paternalistic concern on the one hand was met with a complete and utter loyalty on the other. It was from this context that the ethics of Bushido (the way of the warrior) emerged, which was to be the pattern for behaviour in the Tokugawa Period and to exercise a tremendous influence on the mode of Japanese life right up to the time of the recent war. The code had originated with the practical necessities of the warriors, but it was to become the very cornerstone of national morals. The fundamental elements in Bushido were Rectitude (or Righteousness), Courage and Fortitude, Benevolence (or Paternalism), Politeness, Veracity, Honour, and, above all, Loyalty. The last-named was so emphasized that Bushido has been called a 'religion of loyalty'.

Training in filial piety was also linked with loyalty, and the two are almost indistinguishable. Absolute obedience is enjoined, and the obligation which arose from the relationship (called *giri*) had to be accepted as binding, even when one was convinced that the action arising from the *giri* was basically unjust and contrary to what was recognized as fundamentally right and

morally binding (*gimu*).¹ The obedience meant the complete absence of self-assertion before a superior, and this obedience and reverence in the inferior had to be met with due dignity on the part of the superior. It was important, too, to exercise diligence in the performance of duty: 'If one lives a day let him perform a day's duty and die; if he lives a month let him perform a month's duty and die; if he lives a year, let him perform a year's duty and die.'²

But apart from the Samurai, Bushido also exercised a strong influence on the emerging merchant classes and on the New Religions which began to spring up towards the end of the Tokugawa Period. The latter were concerned to stress loyalty and filial piety, and the several virtues of Bushido – together with a due respect for authority and the fulfilment of obligations towards superiors. Because, for most, the rites of Buddhism tended to centre in funeral services and memorials for the dead, it seemed to say little about man's everyday life. Instead of accepting the customary divorce of religion and ethics, the New Religions were concerned to bring ethics within religion, and have religion impinge upon daily life in the here and now.³

Again we should note that Bushido provided the

¹ Dr Ruth Benedict quotes many cases where this tension between *giri* and *gimu* could be experienced; see *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, passim.

² A saying of Muro Kyūso, quoted in R. C. Armstrong, *Light from the East; Studies in Japanese Confucianism*, University of Toronto Press, 1914, p. 74.

³ For a further consideration of the New Religions, see Ch. 9.

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ethical background of many of the early converts to Protestant Christianity. Schooled already to loyalty, they were concerned to show a like loyalty to their new-found Lord. Dr Nitobe points out, too, the element of self-sacrifice in Bushido,¹ and it has been suggested that it 'was the expression of as lofty an ethical consciousness as any feudal or militaristic society could evolve'.²

So much, then, for the ethical values of society. We must think of the social system too, for that arose from the religious concepts that we have been considering and, in turn, contributed towards new religious thinking. In the hierarchical system of the Tokugawa Period, there were three hundred and sixty recognized class distinctions, passing from the court and Shogunate circles down to the *heimin* (common people) and the unclassified *Eta*, or pariah group. Many of the distinctions, of course, already dated back to the clan system, in which there had been varying divisions of authority, and where the unifying bond of the group had been the common loyalty to the *ujigami*, through whom the kinship of the group was derived. But these older patterns were much elaborated, and the system stereotyped to permit a stricter totalitarian control over the whole of society.

Established ritual patterns were part of the regimentation of the whole of life. The family cult dictated behaviour in the home, whilst the communal cult laid down hard and fast rules for all members of the com-

¹ I. Nitobe, *Bushido, the Soul of Japan* (10th rev. and enlarged ed.), New York, Putnam, 1905.

² T. T. Brumbaugh, *Religious Values in Japanese Culture*, p. 65.

munity. The size of house a man could build was pre-determined – whether his room could have an alcove or not, whether he could wear silk or not, what kind of present he was permitted to give, and even whether he was to drink his rice wine from a proper wine glass or whether he was to be content only with a soup bowl; everything was according to the rule! It is small wonder that the Shrine Festival came to be the only time of emotional katharsis for the members of the lower classes.

What is more, the hierarchical character of society was also reflected in the language used – with the use of pronouns particularly indicating the class of the speaker and his/her relationship to the person he/she was addressing. The pronouns would vary according to whether the speaker was male or female, an equal, a superior, or an inferior. Each grade of society would have its own particular 'I' – and the verbs, too, would be loaded up with honorific forms as the inferior addressed his superior, as compared with the clipped forms which the superior would use to those beneath him.

The unit within society was, and has continued to be, the family – but not the family in the limited western sense. The *dōzokudan* (kin-group) is a much wider unit, embracing both the *honke* (main house – senior branch of the family) and the several *bunke* (derivative houses – junior branches), which might embrace divisions that had arisen as a result of the marriage of younger sons or collateral junior branches of the main family. Within the family ultimate authority rested with the father (or

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grandfather, if still alive), and the ownership of the family property was vested in him. He would act as the family 'priest', and accept responsibility for the ancestor worship before the *kamidana* (if Shinto) or the *Butsudan* (if Buddhist). He could both make and unmake marriages.¹ After the father comes the eldest son, formerly the inheritor of the property by law – and still today, in villages, the heir in almost four cases out of five. It was considered that an equal division of the estate would jeopardize the livelihood of a family – especially where the land unit was rather small. But the eldest son not only inherited the estate; he also inherited the debts and responsibilities; he was tied to the inheritance, whereas younger sons were free to go elsewhere to seek their fortune. The families they start are *bunke* and are very much dependent upon the *honke* and inferior in prestige. At times of banquets (such as on the occasion of a wedding) the members of the *bunke* would have a decidedly lower place.

In the village the heads of five of the family groupings would be responsible for the *buraku*, the basic unit of communal interest in the wider society outside of the family proper. The 'good' is what acts for the preservation or well-being of the *buraku*; 'evil' is what threatens the continuance or stability of the *buraku*. Law is only accepted in as far as it operates in the interests of the tightly knit community.²

¹ Even today most divorces are still due to the incompatibility of the bride not with her husband, but with her parents-in-law.

² For a detailed study of a village community, see John F. Embree,

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The parent-child relationship operates widely throughout Japanese society, both in the town and in the country. Small firms are particularly patterned after the family – with the head of the firm taking the position of the parent (*Oyabun*) and the employees that of the child (*Kobun*). The place of parents may be taken in a larger concern not by the director of the firm, but by a foreman or an older worker. Amongst miners it would be common for an *oyabun* to act as father to a new recruit, instructing him in the traditions of the pit, helping him in his private life and even choosing a wife for him. In return the *kobun* cares for the *oyabun* in his old age and pays the priest for the memorial sutra at his death. In factories, apart from the care of workers exercised by the trade union leaders and secretaries, the foreman is still expected to give an *oyabun*'s protection to those working under him. Even criminal gangs in the big cities will also work on the same principle, and loyalty to the gang-leader is thereby secured.

In big business, too, the *dōzokudan* is operative – with the board of directors acting rather as the headship of a family. Junior branches of the family are brought in to form subsidiary companies, and the whole organization is thought of as an extended family (*shizoku*). At times there will be actual blood ties between the controlling interests of the two companies, but, at other times, there will be the subsidiary relationship established

A Japanese Village, Kegan Paul, 1946. This book depicts village society as it was in 1937. There have been changes in the post-war period, but the basic picture is still pretty much the same.

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without any actual blood links. Even so there is still the same feeling of obligation towards the main company on the part of the subsidiary and a unilateral policy would be unthinkable. Through the maintenance of the relationship direct competition is avoided, and personal feelings are not hurt. The individual's place in society thus becomes a counterpart of his place within the family. The kinship is there – whether of blood or marriage, adoption or service; a hierarchical pattern is preserved in the *oyako* (parent-child); and there is a participation in a common cult.

During the strongly nationalistic period, it was easy to link this pattern of social behaviour to totalitarian ends – with the Emperor recognized as the supreme *oyabun* to whom an absolute loyalty was demanded of all his *kobun*.

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Japan and Western Culture



RUDYARD KIPLING is often quoted as though he was an advocate of apartheid between East and West, 'Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet'; but his sentiment that 'there is neither East nor West . . . when two strong men stand face to face' would have found a ready response amongst the Japanese. Inazo Nitobe would put it that 'the East is in the West and the West is in the East – there are no points in the compass of the soul!'.¹

Ryuichi Kaji wrote:

The earth is round, and the world is a harmonious entity. The East is not eternally severed from the West as Heaven is from Earth. . . . The currents of Occidental and Oriental cultures come into contact with each other in almost every part of the earth, and the harmony of world cultures will be accomplished only in those places where the West meets the East.¹

Japanese culture is essentially a conglomerate affair, and adoption of cultural patterns from outside, followed

¹ R. Kaji, *Japan: her cultural development*, London, Probsthain, 1939, pp. 4-5.

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by a process of intelligent adaptation, has been a mark of her history. The fact that the foreign elements were adapted meant that Japan's developing culture became something distinctively her own – although, at times, the attempt to adapt has been too direct and the difficulties involved in an adaptation have not always been fully realized. But the fact that Japan accepted first Chinese culture and then the culture of the West did not mean the destruction of the old fabric of the former Japanese culture.¹ The old is always present with the new, but where once the foreign has been accepted within the traditional, it is no longer accounted foreign – even though it may not measure up to the stature of the traditional in the eyes of the purist, and there have always been those who would place the golden age in the past and feel that change must be repudiated and the hands of the clock be put back.

Donald Keene illustrates how Japan, once having absorbed a foreign tradition, regards it as her own:

No Japanese thinks of his business suit as an outlandish or affected garb. . . . To wear Japanese garments would actually be strange and uncomfortable for most men. The majority of Japanese of today wear Western culture also as they wear their clothes and to keep reminding them that their ancestors originally attired themselves otherwise is at once bad manners and foolish.²

But the persistence of the old patterns in Japan means,

¹ Cf. N. Hasegawa, 'Modernism in Japan', *Contemporary Japan*, V (1936-7), p. 64.

² Introduction to O. Dazai, *No Longer Human* (Engl. trans.), London, Peter Owen, 1959, p. 10.

too, that, whilst elements of foreign cultures are accepted by her, a principle of selectivity is followed. The basis of the selection is often utilitarian. When Christianity was first introduced into Japan in the sixteenth century, it was welcomed by certain of the *daimyōs* who were anxious for trade with the western powers, and the so-called 'Christian Century' did witness a limited amount of westernization as a result. In 1587, when Hideyoshi put his first ban on missionary activity, he sought to distinguish between what the West could do for Japan in terms of trade and the religion of the West, but, finding that the two tended to come together, was slow to put his anti-Christian legislation into effect. When, later, the Tokugawa government found that it was impossible to continue foreign trade and shut out Christianity, it decided upon the closed-door policy. In 1638 an edict was put out which prohibited all intercourse with the Portuguese, and two years later a prospective embassy from Macao was seized, and most of its members executed upon their refusal to apostasize. Over their heads was placed a statement which ended with the words: 'So long as the sun warms the earth, let no Christian be so bold as to come to Japan, and let all know that if King Philip himself, or even the very God of the Christians, or the great Shaka contravene this prohibition, they shall pay for it with their heads.'¹ Even before this event Japanese had been prevented by decree from travelling abroad, and in 1641 restrictions

¹ J. Murdoch, *A History of Japan*, vol. II, Kobe, Japan Chronicle, 1903, p. 667.

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were even put upon trade with the Dutch. Their ships were only permitted to put in at the small island of Deshima on terms that were somewhat humiliating for the Dutch, and any contact between them and the Japanese became almost impossible. In this way, Japan's concern to prevent the re-introduction of Christianity meant that she was ready to surrender those advantages which formerly had come from contact with the westerner. During the Tokugawa Period, what Japan received of western science and medicine was by translation of Chinese and Dutch works.

The same principle of selectivity was followed at the beginning of the Meiji Era, when it was found impossible to 'expel the barbarians' after the West had forcibly opened the shut door and a policy of swift modernization was decided upon. There was no indiscriminate acceptance of the West; only those elements were welcomed which were considered to be useful to Japan. For the sake of modernization, the Meiji Government welcomed the science and technology of the West, but tried to avoid Christian influences as much as possible, even though there was a temporary flirting with Christianity on largely utilitarian grounds (see next chapter). Professor Ariga has asserted that, as a result, 'the kind of Western civilization Japan has accepted may be called "Western civilization minus Christianity"'.¹ The fact that Christianity had played a normative role in the formation of Western culture has been largely dis-

¹ T. Ariga, 'The meeting of East and West on the Japanese scene', *Japanese Religions*, I.3 (Kyoto, 1959), p. 5.

regarded. The externals are there without the inner kernel.

A good example of this divorce between external patterns and fundamental principles can be seen in the sphere of politics. Parliamentary government was introduced in the Meiji Period, and has been still further encouraged during the post-war era of 'democratization'. Terms like 'freedom' and 'equality' are freely bandied about, and yet the consciousness that, in the West, such ideas are linked with a Christian view of man (despite the growing secularization in the West) is missing. Professor Nishitani points out that, when the parliamentary system of government was introduced, the underlying religious and philosophical presuppositions were lacking. 'Consequently, only the outward system and the political concept of parliamentary government, separated from the fundamental consciousness of the freedom of human beings, were established.'¹

It has been suggested that the peculiarity of Japan's modern culture is due to the fact that it combines the fundamental of Oriental thought with the philosophical methodology of the West. In other Oriental countries Western civilization has been introduced, and Christian institutions also established, but the old and the new have largely been preserved in contradistinction. For the amalgamation to take place in Japan, a new form of philosophy has been required. As it was mainly the science and technology of the West which was being

¹ K. Nishitani, 'The religious situation in present-day Japan', *Contemporary Religions in Japan*, March 1960, pp. 8-9.

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introduced, it was natural to look to some vague 'philosophy of science'. As the Japanese have a respect for everything philosophical, and philosophy itself partakes of the mystical, this 'philosophy of science' came to be regarded as the highest value in the cultural world. Dr Watanabe, a leading theologian, has said that this 'superstitious veneration' for philosophy is 'a strange and peculiar phenomenon which can only be seen in Japan'.¹ Germany was revered as the country of philosophy, and Japanese scholars, trained in Germany, returned with their 'German philosophy' – but, here too, the presuppositions of European philosophy were not understood. In the first place, the Japanese students were often ignorant of Christianity and, in particular, of the Christian idea of God; in the second place, a pantheistic basis was substituted for the original theistic one. Dr Watanabe illustrates: 'Some years ago, when the "I-Thou" philosophy of Martin Buber was introduced to the academic circle in this country, a well known professor of philosophy in a government university interpreted it and explained it in terms of Pantheism. He could not see that the 'I and Thou' as person, implied in this philosophy, could not be understood correctly except in the Creator-creature relation.'² The Christian concept of the personal is, of course, one of the most difficult to interpret within the Japanese cultural scene.

Many Japanese writers stress the rapid change of the

¹ Z. Watanabe, 'The lack of cultural consciousness and power in the Church of Japan', *Japan Christian Quarterly*, January 1959, pp. 48-55.

² *Ibid.*, p. 53.

past one hundred years, with the result that the problems emerging from the new cultural developments are so bewildering that the Japanese have been robbed of any deep-rooted convictions. Normally the consciousness of the past would exert a conservative drag on their lives, but the creation of the cultural chasm between the present and the past, and the loss of historical unity, has tended to cut off modern Japanese from their roots. The result has been a tendency towards an even more advanced relativism in every department of life.

The demand for rapid modernization has also meant that specialization rather than versatility becomes the object of admiration. In education it means that there is the demand to be 'up to date' with the latest theory rather than to be grounded basically in fundamentals. The scholar who has concentrated on a very narrow field of research is acclaimed as the truly scholarly person, and this may often involve an intimate knowledge of some of the most subtle or obscure elements within western culture, even though it cannot be put into context or perspective, because the more commonplace or elementary has been despised or disregarded. Professor Ariga illustrates this tendency with an entertaining story. A Japanese student in America wanted to earn some money as a cook, and so went to a friend to ask him to teach him cooking. 'The latter said: "The most important part of cooking is pie-making. . . . And the most important part of a pie is its crust. So I'll teach you how to make a good crust."' ' On learning how to make a crust, he got hired as a cook only to find that he knew

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nothing about the filling! Dr Ariga feels that, in relationship to western thought and culture, there has been too much concentration on the crust and too little on the making of fillings.¹

Coupled with this tendency towards over-specialization is the lack of logical consistency. The rich variety of what is introduced from abroad is of greater importance for the Japanese than the way the new is combined with the old. There is harmony and an inner consistency in what is basically traditional. A basically Japanese meal follows its own categories, but the Japanese also like a mixture, which will appear strange to the foreigner. And the same is true in the world of ideas. Without any regard for logical consistency a whole mixture of mutually exclusive or self-contradictory ideas will be brought together. Just as Shinto and Buddhism were held in conjunction by the masses of Japanese, so a modern Japanese may combine Marxism, Schweitzer, Zen, and Mill in his system of thought.

It has been said, too, that the Japanese are born ideologists, and so they search for some set of rules or pattern, by which to order life and society. The very disruption of modern life is due to the breakdown of old patterns – even though, as we have seen, there is a strange persistence about some of them. They feel that there must be some over-all system, which will eradicate their inner tensions and grant freedom from instability and insecurity. This demand for a system explains much of the popularity of Marxism in Japan today.² It has been

¹ T. Ariga, *op. cit.*, pp. 8–9.

² See Ch. 9.

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suggested that the reaction of Japanese to the Occupation in the post-war period can be understood in the light of this search for a pattern. Defeat had meant the eradication of old rules for the ordering of individual life or society, and so 'they turned to the act of surrender itself to provide them with new rules'. Once a particular attitude had been decided upon, there was the possibility of living again. The new set of rules might be a bit mystifying and exacting at times, but they were at least rules, and the possibility of conforming to some established pattern did bring a relaxation from the inner anxiety which, otherwise, could only have led to nihilism.¹

¹ Kazuo Kawai, *Japan's American Interlude*, London, CUP, 1960, pp. 6-7.

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Christianity in Japan



THERE have already been many occasions to comment on the spirit of religious tolerance, which would lead to a mingling of various religions, and the possibility of describing Shinto as 'the root of the tree', Confucianism as its 'stem and branches', and Buddhism as 'its flower and fruits' (a saying attributed to Shōtoku Taishi, but probably dating to the thirteenth century). In the case of Christianity, however, we have an element which refused to mingle with the others to create some new synthesis. Christianity is often charged with intolerance, because it refuses to accommodate itself to other beliefs and accept the position of religious relativism, but defenders of Christianity's exclusiveness would be quick to assert that to reject a 'once-for-all'-ness in Christianity is to render it no longer Christianity. But this chapter is not concerned so much with a defence of the Christian Gospel as with an examination of its impact upon Japan.

Some writers have suggested that Nestorian Christianity made its impact on Japan in the Nara Period, coming into Japan alongside Buddhism, and that Shingon

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Buddhism, in particular, had absorbed some aspects of Christianity. The evidence is, however, slight, and it is advisable to begin the story of Christianity in Japan with the arrival of St Francis Xavier in 1549, when he was accompanied by two other Portuguese Jesuits and a Japanese convert, Yajiro, who had taken refuge on a Portuguese ship some six years before, and been baptized in India. The local lord, where they had landed (at Kagoshima), was anxious for trade with the Portuguese and gladly gave Xavier permission to preach. The fact that non-Christian countries tend to understand Christianity from the standpoint of their own culture and religions meant that Xavier was, at first, thought to be the exponent of another Buddhist sect, seeing that – for the Japanese – Buddhism was the foreigner's religion. The Virgin Mary was understood by many as Kannon (the *Bosatsu* of Mercy, particularly emphasized by the Tendai Sect). Buddhist priests soon discovered their mistake when the Jesuits began not only to preach, but also to attack the Buddhist faith.

There was a tendency to judge Buddhism by the frailty of its observers – and to disregard its more lofty sentiments. An important principle is involved here. For the Christian to obtain a sympathetic understanding of the beliefs of a non-Christian religion he must recall that, as he would not wish Christianity to be adjudged by its adherents (even though a faith should produce its fruits), so he is not to judge other faiths by the frailties of those who are not always their best adherents. If we want to judge other religions simply by their appear-

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ances, we must be prepared for others to judge Christianity in the same way.

One historian emphasizes the importance of experience and study, and says that the Jesuit missionaries 'at times fell into the error of needlessly offending Japanese sentiment' and failed 'to make allowances' for peculiar characteristics in the Japanese tradition.¹ Amongst the difficulties in the early evangelistic task – apart from an instinctive Japanese fear of foreign influence – an ignorance of the Japanese language and traditions had pride of place.

In the circumstances, it was not surprising that the Buddhist priests opposed the missionaries, and that the ruler in 1550 issued an edict forbidding the adoption of the Christian faith on pain of death. But the edict was only local in its bearing, and Xavier was able to move on to Hirado.

The favourable reception at Hirado was occasioned by the fact that there were Portuguese merchants in the port, and the local Japanese lord was quick to notice the reception given to the missionaries by the merchants. In a period of ten days more than a hundred Japanese were baptized. Seeing the benefit of having the ruler's commendation, Xavier determined to visit the Emperor in Kyoto and enlist his support – which he failed to do. In this way Xavier set the pattern for future Jesuit work, which followed the principle that 'it was not enough to preach to the poor and unlearned, but that their leaders must be gained over'.² The Jesuit mission was ex-

¹ G. B. Sansom, *The Western World and Japan*, p. 127.

² Sansom, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

clusively Portuguese, and for a time Japan was put by the Pope in the sphere of Portuguese interests whether for trade or for evangelism. It was marked throughout by the attempt to convert 'the smaller socially superior group who would set the example'.¹ By contrast, the Spanish Franciscans, who came from Manila in 1592, felt that the Jesuit method involved too much an accommodation to existing cultural patterns and that the Jesuits were becoming 'Japanified' and so neglecting the poorer classes. They, in company with the Dominicans and Augustinians who followed them, clashed far more violently with the culture, because they sought to overthrow the existing non-Christian culture and establish a Christian society from the bottom up. These rival views concerning non-Christian cultures have been held in more recent times, too. Of late, the Roman Catholic Church, as a whole, has shown far greater readiness to work *within* the structure of the existing society than the Protestant Churches which have regarded the structure of society as essentially non-Christian, and have felt it to be part of the Church's task to effect a complete reformation of society.

Despite the fact that Xavier was only in the country for two years, he is entitled to be called the 'Apostle to the Japanese' — even though we may criticize his methods. One cannot but admire his courage and devotion, his vision and his burning zeal for the cause he served. The Japanese were gripped by his personality,

¹ Irving I. Kramer, 'The Jesuit impact on Japan', *Contemporary Japan*, XXI (1952-3), p. 603.

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and their traditional respect for the 'leader' meant that 'the soundness of a doctrine [was] often less important than the character of its exponent'.¹ Bishop Tucker makes the following criticism of Xavier's methods:

He used the eagerness of the feudal lords for foreign trade as a means for winning their approval of his missionary work, and relied too much on this approval as a motive which would induce their subjects to embrace Christianity. Yet in this he was but following the example of many of the missionaries who were responsible for the conversion of Northern Europe. . . . His failure in Kyoto taught him that nothing could be accomplished without using the prestige of Portugal and the desire of the Japanese for foreign trade as an opening wedge. It was a dubious and as the sequel showed a dangerous policy, but even modern missionaries have often yielded to the temptation to use the prestige of the West as a means for promoting their work.²

In considering the Jesuit mission, it is important to remember the distances involved and the perils of travel in the sixteenth century, and also the fact that large groups of missionaries were never deployed. In the first decade of the work only 12 missionaries were present at any one time in Japan – and yet by 1571 there were 30,000 Christians in Japan, of whom only 1500 as yet were in the capital. Even by 1579, when the Christians total had risen to 130,000, and there had been a total of 10,000 converts in Kyoto alone in the previous two years, there were only 54 members of the society in

¹ Sansom, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

² H. St G. Tucker, *The History of the Episcopal Church in Japan*, New York, Scribners, 1938, pp. 24–5.

Japan, and only 20 of them were Fathers. Just before the dispersion in 1614 with the anti-Christian edict of that year, there were about 500,000 Christians (almost two per cent of the population) – and yet the Jesuit Province had only 121 members, including 62 priests, of whom 7 were Japanese, and 59 brothers, the majority of whom were Japanese. At that time there were 245 Japanese seminary students and catechists.

The spread of Christianity in the sixteenth century was undoubtedly facilitated by the political circumstances of the time. It was an age when rival factions were struggling for the control of the country, and it was easy for Christianity to become a tool in the struggle. So Nobunaga, the military leader who gained control of the capital in 1568, was concerned to overthrow the strong Buddhist centres, which were allied politically with his military opponents, and naturally favoured the Christian mission as a further irritant to his Buddhist opponents – even though he personally had no faith-commitment whatever. When, however, the Christians became seemingly involved in political intrigues of which he disapproved, favour could quickly turn to severe opposition. This was itself a warning of possible future developments. In the unstable political situation it would be possible for local lords who favoured the Christian cause to be the political enemies of the dominant faction – and this is actually what did happen in the next century, when religion and politics were decidedly intermingled in the final overthrow of Christians by the Tokugawa Shogunate. So long as

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Christianity was regarded as a means to some secular end, its progress was precarious. The experience of the Roman Catholic mission should be a warning against appealing to purely secular motives in order to gain response to a spiritual message. There has been a like danger in post-war years, when some foreign speakers in Japan have spoken of Christianity as a 'bulwark against Communism' as though the establishment of an anti-Communist front was the primary cause of the mission of the Church!

Nobunaga was succeeded as military leader in 1582 by Hideyoshi, who continued to favour Christianity for a time. A Jesuit wrote of him in 1584:

Hideyoshi was not only not opposed to the things of God, but he even showed that he made much of them, and preferred them to all the sects of the bonzes (i.e. Buddhist priests)!¹

In 1587, however, he suddenly issued an edict which, whilst permitting Portuguese traders to continue to come to Japan, banned the entry of foreign priests. This came as a surprise from a man who had spoken of making half of Japan Christian. It is likely that he was concerned about the domination exercised over the Japanese church by foreign priests, and that there was a growing conviction on his part that they were the forerunners of political intrigue and aggression. Although the edict was not strictly enforced for ten years, the arrival of the Franciscans and the Dominicans from the Philippines (a Spanish possession) led to dissension in the Christian

¹ J. Murdoch, *History*, vol. II, p. 211.

ranks, somewhat discrediting its message. We have here an example of disunity within the Church being the Church's worst enemy. Kramer writes:

The strife not only discredited the teachings of peace and brotherhood but gave comfort to the strife-ridden Buddhist sects who could now point to the Christians as being no better than they. . . . This strife was one of the prime causes of the ruin of the missions.¹

The coming of Dutch and English traders also brought a note of opposition. The Portuguese did not even look upon them as Christians, but from them the Japanese understood that the papal authority was not recognized throughout Europe! Even when the death of Hideyoshi had brought a respite from persecution, which had begun with the crucifixion of the twenty-six martyrs of Nagasaki and other atrocities, it was an Englishman, Will Adams, who allowed his anti-Catholic (or perhaps, more correctly, his anti-Spanish) bias to make a denunciation of Roman Catholic aims to Ieyasu, the first of the Tokugawas, who had succeeded Hideyoshi:

First of all they sent friars and Jesuits into the lands which they intended to conquer; and the task of the missionaries was to convert as many of the people of those lands as possible to Roman Catholicism. Later, when sufficient converts had been made, the King of Spain sent his troops, and these, with the help of the converts (a sixteenth-century fifth column!) quickly conquered the country for their monarch.²

Ieyasu had been eager for foreign trade and was at first

¹ Irving I. Kramer, *op. cit.*, p. 604.

² P. G. Rogers, *The First Englishman in Japan: the story of Will Adams*, London, Harvill Press, 1956.

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inclined to be tolerant of the new religion, but he was moved both by Will Adams' warning and by exhibitions of religious fervour which seemed to endanger traditional patterns of behaviour. He felt that Christianity, if left uncurbed, would lead to an overthrow of established order and particularly undermine the loyalty of the people towards the Shogunate. Accordingly, in 1614, he ordered all Christian missionaries to leave Japan and all churches to be closed down. Japanese were forbidden to practise Christianity on pain of death. As in Hideyoshi's time, the edict was not strictly enforced at the start, as Ieyasu did not wish to preclude completely the possibility of trade with the Spanish colonies. Nevertheless, missionaries and many converts were imprisoned, tortured and put to death. The fact that many of the Japanese converts hung on to their new-found faith with amazing tenacity and even smuggled missionaries into the country at a time when detection meant certain death, encouraged the Shogunate in the belief that the continuance of Christianity would mean a permanent group whose loyalty could not be assumed. As the persecution became more severe, it is likely that thousands died for their faith, the majority of them being simple peasants. Finally, in 1637, a considerable rising took place on the island of Amakusa and the Shimabara Peninsula, near Nagasaki; the rebel forces consisted almost entirely of Christian converts. After they had held out against the Shogunate forces for months, in the end over 30,000 – including women and children as well as the men – were massacred. After that, Christians

were hounded out throughout the country – with the faithful suffering the death penalty and the luke-warm apostasizing. Even so, Christianity was able to survive – howbeit, underground – to emerge again when Japan was opened again to the Christian missionary a hundred years ago. But for more than two hundred years after the Shimabara massacre Japan remained closed to the rest of the world.

The persecution of Christians was accompanied by a considerable anti-Christian polemic on the part of both Buddhist and Confucian writers with the result that the populace at large received the impression of Christianity not only as a '*religio illicita*' but also as an 'evil thing'. The fact that this polemic was often extremely bitter is not surprising, if it is remembered that Christian attacks upon Buddhism and Buddhist priests were not exactly mild. Buddhism, particularly of the Zen variety, had been attacked as 'sheer nihilism' or immoral naturalism.¹ Christian *daimyōs* had often been encouraged by the missionaries to destroy Buddhist temples – an attitude which left a heritage of bitterness.

It has been said that the efficacy of the missionary effort in the 'Christian Century' in terms of personnel used was some five hundred times that of the effort today. One factor – apart from the political – was the readiness of the Jesuits to accept the customs and culture of the Japanese. Some would say that their approach

¹ For examples of anti-Christian polemic, see M. Anesaki, 'Japanese criticism and refutations of Christianity in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', *The Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* (Second Series), VII (1930), pp. 1–15.

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involved compromise, as the very use of Buddhist terminology, although making Christianity more palatable, 'carried the danger that the Japanese understanding of it would be as their understanding of Buddhism'.¹ Professor Ebisawa also points out that, for many, the Christian message brought 'relief from the shackles of feudalism'. In this connection, it is noticeable that, whereas many of the converts from among the nobility apostasized, plebeian converts were ready to face martyrdom in their thousands.

Japan's isolation, as we have seen (in Ch. 6), was a thorough-going one, and it was accompanied by the attempt to stamp out Christianity altogether. In every town and village notice boards were erected, declaring that the adoption of the Christian religion was a criminal offence and offering rewards for information that would lead to arrest. It was small wonder, then, that Christianity came to be looked upon with abhorrence, and emotional rejection was added to political considerations. When, therefore, the trading interests of the western nations forced open the closed door, and the Treaties of 1858 granted the visiting foreigners the freedom to practise their own religion and abolished the practice of forcing suspected Christians to trample upon a picture of the Christ, missionaries (who were quick to arrive) soon experienced the widespread spirit of rejection. The American consul, Townsend Harris, who negotiated the first of the treaties, remarked:

¹ A. Ebisawa, 'Crypto-Christianity in Tokugawa Japan', *Japan Quarterly*, VII (1960), p. 289.

The intolerance of the Japanese in regard to the Christian religion forbids us to hope that they would consent to any stipulation by which missionaries would be allowed to enter that empire, or Christian worship according to the form of any sect would be permitted.¹

One of the earliest Protestant missionaries (Dr Verbeck) wrote:

We found the natives not at all accessible touching religious matters. When such a subject was mooted in the presence of a Japanese, his hand would, almost involuntarily, be applied to his throat, to indicate the extreme perilousness of such a topic. . . . We were regarded as persons who had come to seduce the masses of the people from their loyalty to the 'God-country', and corrupt their morals generally.²

The early missionaries were surrounded by spies, and at times were in danger of assassination. It was not surprising, therefore, that the first fourteen years of combined Protestant missionary activity (1859-73) produced no more than twelve baptisms. In 1865 the French Roman Catholic missionaries discovered the existence of the crypto-Christians, and it was thought that there were as many as 50,000, though for a long time many refused to establish contact with the foreign missionaries. Even the overthrow of the Tokugawa Shogunate and the restoration of Imperial control did not alter after the general picture. In actual fact, the revival of Shinto at that time even led to a tightening of official legislation against Christianity. The old edicts

¹ Quoted in *The Japan Christian Year Book 1959*, p. 88.

² *Ibid.*, p. 233.

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against it were renewed, and the crypto-Christians who had declared themselves particularly suffered, some three thousand being sent into exile in 1868. In 1871 the teacher of a Protestant missionary, together with his wife, was sent to prison, where he died. It is likely that the official opposition would have continued for much longer, had there not been a *volte face* on the political side. It was a desire to be accepted amongst the western nations, which was necessary if Japan was to accomplish an industrial revolution and so protect herself from western imperialistic encroachment, and to revise the unequal Treaties, which caused the government to remove the edicts against Christianity – rather than a change of heart. In 1872 Prince Iwakura had been sent to Washington to seek revision of the treaty which restricted Japanese autonomy to some degree, and there he gathered the opinions of the West about the arrest of Japanese Christians. Dr Gulick recounts how ‘the Prince immediately wrote to his government, that, if they wished any favors from the American government, the edicts against Christianity . . . must be removed. Promptly, but silently, the edict-boards were removed from public notice.’¹ Within the year (1873) the numbers of missionaries, Roman Catholic and Protestant, doubled.

The next fifteen years were the heyday of modern missions in Japan – not so much that the number of converts was numerous, but that the impact of Christianity on the country as a whole was tremendous. So

¹ Ibid., p. 266.

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comparatively rapid was the advance that many expected Japan to become a Christian nation by the end of the century. The attraction was largely political. Japan desired close links with the West, and the missionary was at first the only channel through whom the scientific civilization could flow to Japan. Not only did promising and ambitious young men and women knock at the doors of the missionary homes and church buildings, but the central government, too, became increasingly favourable to Christianity – even though this attitude did not penetrate to the country areas, where the anti-Christian prejudice persisted and where the Buddhist priests began a vigorous counter-attack, persuading their followers to pledge themselves to non-attendance at Christian gatherings. A so-called *Comic History of Tokugawa and Meiji* gives this picture:

The Buddhist images, even down to the roadside statues which had lost their noses, all rushed forward arrayed in ranks for a valiant attack on the heights of the Shinto gods. These latter prepared to defend themselves rather than suffer defeat by default. . . . Just at this juncture, Jesus Christ, familiarly known as Yaso-san, arrived in the wake of the red-bearded foreigners. He had come from lands afar to reconnoiter Japan. Utilizing the conflict between Shinto and Buddhism, he took possession of a small bit of land. He gradually made friends by spreading palliating 'amens' among the people. Shinto and Buddhism observed that they could not laugh away this force and realized that in their strife they might both fall before the foreigner. . . . Finally, they united against him. But Yaso-san had gradually wormed his way into the domain of Shinto and Buddhism under the

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guise of modern learning, and one by one imposing churches sprang up over the countryside.¹

During this period Christianity experienced the fact that there are disadvantages as well as advantages in popularity. The close connection between Christianity and western civilization meant that Christianity once again became considered a means to an end – the westernization and development of Japan. The progressively-minded Japanese felt that Japan should even become a Christian country, and Yūkichi Fukuzawa, the founder of Keio University and an early newspaper lord, suggested that a nominal acceptance of Christianity would give Japan a place amongst the nations, and proposed that baptism should be ‘gradually introduced among the upper and middle classes’.² A Commission considered the ‘pros’ and ‘cons’ of Christianity as a state religion. The report was against adoption on the grounds that the moral conditions of the peoples professing Christianity hardly recommended the faith! But, just as the desire for links with the West encouraged the spread of Christianity, so Japan’s failure to acquire treaty revisions from the West added to the growing hostility towards Christianity on the part of many. Besides, there was a fundamental conflict between the old social structure and the Christian ethic with its stress on basic equality. The government looked rather to Shinto to bolster its strength at home, and, by sending

¹ Quoted in H. Kishimoto, *Japanese Religion in the Meiji Era*, Tokyo, 1956, p. 185.

² See O. Cary, Chapter VII, *The Christian Movement*, 1909, pp. 133–41.

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young students abroad, endeavoured to gain the techniques of the West without the roots of western culture. Whereas the newly-established mission schools had been the leaders in the promulgation of the new culture, the Church gradually lost its initiative in the cultural development of the country, and Japan received western science and philosophy uprooted from any Christian environment. Liberal forces wrote some measure of religious liberty into the 1889 Constitution, but there was hardly freedom of evangelism. Anyone engaged in disseminating the faith had to submit a personal history to the local administrative office – including both the name of the church and the methods of dissemination. There were also restrictions in the matter of buildings (only to be eased at the local level as late as 1930). In addition, among the intellectuals, a class of government-employed scholars taught the evils of Christianity, motivated largely by the Confucian ethics which formed the basis of the 1890 Imperial Rescript on Education. For them Christianity had within itself the seeds of rebellion and disunity.

One reason for the limited success of the missionary activity was that its appeal was in the main to the more intellectual Samurai, who had been the supporters of the Shogunate and who tended to receive Christianity as a 'crisis religion'. For many of them, too, Christianity was not looked upon as an end in itself – but as a means towards national reform or revolution. But the fact that motives were not always pure did not mean that their conversion was not genuine, and some of the finest

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Japanese Christian leaders came from the former exponents of Bushido. Because the missionaries found in them intelligent and zealous followers, there was little attempt on the Church's part to make an impact on Japanese society at its very heart. The message of Christianity was thus highly individualistic and strongly city-centred. Professor Ohata makes the following criticism:

The church entered in the metropolitan areas where the intelligentsia lived. The splinter sects also tended to congregate in the large cities. The Catholics at first worked among the lowest classes and the farmers, but soon they became even more closely associated with the highest social classes than were the Protestants. (The Church, he says, should have gone to the rural areas) – But there, the traditional suspicion of Christianity and the remnants of feudalism were too strong. *Christianity fled back into the cities.*¹

And there the Church has tended to remain. Even today Christian statistics give more than a quarter of the Christians to the three cities of Tokyo, Osaka and Kobe. Whereas Tokyo has about 14 Christians for every 1000 of the population, the rural average would be barely 1 in a 1000. It has been suggested that the identification of Christianity with the intellectuals tended to rob the Church of its prophetic vision, as there was little outspoken criticism of the tendencies towards supernaturalism and economic injustice. The New Religions have stepped in with a gospel for the masses, to whom the Christian Gospel has hardly been presented yet.

¹ In H. Kishimoto, op. cit., p. 308.

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Dr Drummond, however, believes that the history of Protestantism in Japan shows an alternating confrontation with Japanese society and accommodation to it. He would suggest that the continuing attrition of society on the Church has often succeeded in dulling the edge of the Church's prophetic mission. The recession which followed the Imperial Rescript on Education was particularly noticeable in the Christian schools, where numbers dropped considerably, but the first decade of the twentieth century saw a new Christian resurgence and outreach. This period witnessed Kagawa's early work with the labouring classes. There followed a decade when any effective Christian participation in politics or in the labour movement was eliminated, but the next decade saw an upsurge of Christian energy and the greatest growth in the Church since the period before 1889. During the next ten years the Church was forced to retrench before the growing militaristic totalitarianism, and, although a prophetic voice was heard from one and another, there was no strongly enunciated protest.¹

Another reason for the weakness of the Christian impact on Japan was the growing sectarianism. The early Christians – like the early missionaries – were very much concerned for Christian unity, and the first church to be established (at Yokohama in 1872) claimed to be non-denominational. The Osaka Conference of Missionaries in 1883 also stressed unity and indigenization within the

¹ R. H. Drummond, 'Japan – a century of Protestantism', *Japan Christian Quarterly*, January 1960, pp. 16–24.

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Church in Japan, whilst the Anglicans who held their first united Synod in 1887 and organized their church as the Nippon Sei Kō Kai (Japan Holy Catholic Church) chose their name in the hope that there would be but one manifestation of the Church Catholic, and sent out invitations to the other missionaries and Christian groups. But denominational lines were already becoming hard-set, and even though some churches (notably the Congregational Church) early emphasized self-support and Japanese control, there was long a tendency for the missionaries to keep paternal grasp upon the churches. This meant that, as the tide swung against the West, opposition against a western-controlled church would also emerge, and that a call for a Japonicized Christianity should be raised. If a church organized according to western patterns was not acceptable, could Japan bring into being a church more compatible with Japanese ideas and yet still distinctively Christian? It is in this context that the work of Kanzō Uchimura and the non-Church Movement, which he inaugurated, must be considered.

Uchimura (1861–1930), like so many of the other early Christians, came from a Samurai family, and valued his past traditions. His introduction to Christianity came at the new Agricultural College in Sapporo, started the previous year by William S. Clark, whose Christian influence was so tremendous that in ten months he left an indelible impression – with a whole class baptized as Christians. On his conversion, Uchimura added his name to the 'Covenant of Believers in Jesus', which had been written by Clark. In some ways Uchimura was a

typical product of the new westernization, but in others he became a rebel against it. Over against a mere copy of the West, he sought to propound a 'Japanese Christianity'.

When a Japanese truly and independently believes in Christ, he is a Japanese Christian, and his Christianity is Japanese Christianity. . . . A Japanese by becoming a Christian does not cease to be Japanese. On the contrary, he becomes more Japanese by becoming a Christian. . . . A Japanese who becomes an American or an Englishman, or an amorphous universal man, is neither a true Japanese or a true Christian.¹

Elsewhere, Uchimura speaks of his love for the two J's – which are Jesus and Japan. He feels that they are not mutually exclusive loves. His faith is not a 'circle with one centre'; it is an 'ellipse with two centres'. His argument is that his love for country is purified through his love for Christ, whilst his love for Christ becomes particularized and objectified in his love for his country. He asked, too, that upon his tombstone should be inscribed the words

*I for Japan;
Japan for the World;
The World for Christ;
And all for God.*

But Uchimura's patriotism did not mean an unquestioning acceptance of all that his country did. Both Uchimura himself and his disciples in the Mukyokai (non-church) movement have often shown a keener prophetic insight than many in the organized churches. Uchimura was

¹ Zenshu XV.579 (Tokyo 1932-3).

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anxious to retain the purity of Christianity, untinged by Westernism. He once had a dream, in which he saw a heavy dew falling on Mount Fuji, which he interpreted as the dew of divine grace. The waters of the dew flowed to the east and to the west until the whole world was covered with its divine purity. On awakening he said, 'Amen, so let it be.' He interpreted the dream to mean that a pure form of biblical Christianity would spring from Japan and rejuvenate all Christendom. The movement he started seeks to participate in the Christian faith without the Church, as the empirical Church had become so petrified as to deny the reality of the Church, as interpreted in the New Testament. Emil Brunner has described the movement as 'a purely Japanese type of Christianity which truly meets and understands the Japanese spirit' — but it is likely that it, too, was largely influenced by the over-individualistic approach of Christianity in the nineteenth century. There is, too, the danger that a 'nationalistic Christianity' might mean the denial of the reality that in Christ nationalism must be ultimately meaningless, because there is 'neither Jew nor Greek' (Gal. 3.28). In repudiating the Church, Uchimura and his followers are not repudiating necessarily what the New Testament teaches of the Church. In fact, whilst rejecting the established churches, Mukyokai cannot entirely reject the basic concept, and must understand itself as 'an assembly of Christians' (an equivalent, surely, of the *ecclesia*) or a 'congregation of believers filled with the spirit' (the *communio fidelium* of the Reformers!) or 'the gathering of the saved' ('the

fellowship of the saints' of the creeds!). But, for Uchimura, to have the organized church is not to have the true Church; only those without the conventional church can experience what the true Church is.

Yet, despite the fact that Mukyokai adherents are regarded as the 'cross-legged' Christians (pursuing their communal Bible study in Japanese fashion), it is doubtful whether it can address itself to the hard core of Japanese society, for it, too, makes its appeal to the limited groups of the more westernized; once again, as with the churches, it is the student group – the intelligentsia – which is addressed. It is not without significance that Uchimura himself made extensive use of English!¹ But these same intellectuals still feel that Uchimura is essentially Japanese, emphasizing that the actual condition of Japanese life is a blending of East and West, so that a wide use of English would be pardonable. Some apologists might say that the individualistic approach is not necessarily non-Japanese, as faith has been an individual matter in Japan, even though 'religion' has been a family or communal affair. So whilst Christianity might

¹ Emil Brunner was very attracted to the Mukyokai group during his time in Japan and expressed his opinion as follows: 'I think the disregard of the organized Church is wrong. I also think that the disregard of Mukyokai is wrong. . . . The Body of Christ is not limited to the Church. The Mukyokai are right in saying, "If *ecclesia* is translated by 'Church', then there is 'salvation outside the Church'." The Lord of the Church is free to use other means than those of the institutional Church to draw people to Himself and make them disciples. . . . We must be open for the possibility that Christ uses means, outside the churches, for His purpose' (Brunner, 'Ecclesia and Evangelism', *Japan Christian Quarterly*, April 1955, pp. 154-5).

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be condemned as a foreign plant kept in a hothouse, Uchimura would be quoted by the non-Christian Japanese as an exception.

Yet despite its limitations, the Christian mission in Japan managed to make an impression far beyond its numbers – largely through its educational and social work. The small Christian Church was influential in penal reform, temperance, the establishment of nursing schools and modern medicine. Bit by bit the activity was extended to take in relief of the poor, education for the blind, the deaf and dumb, and other under-privileged groups, care for the leper, dormitories for working women, the establishment of kindergartens and day nurseries, agitation against prostitution (which finally led to the Anti-Prostitution Law of 1957) and a host of other activities. Gradually, a social consciousness became more widespread, so that work which had been pioneered by the Christians became part of a public programme, whilst the Buddhist Temple and the New Religions also moved into the sphere of social service and education. The fact that the Church was centred in the towns meant that she first applied herself to the problems of the densely populated industrial areas, but Kagawa began his Farmers' Gospel School in the 1920's, which tried somewhat unsuccessfully to bring the spirit of Christianity to the rural areas. Even as late as 1958 it was estimated that almost thirty per cent of all voluntary social work was in the hands of the Christian groups, which is some indication of the contribution of Christianity's side-products to the country at large. In education, the most

notable achievement was the pioneering of education for women. The government programme for women's education only started in 1900; prior to that there were only Christian schools for girls.

It was chiefly because of its wider work that Christianity gradually gained status as Japan's third religion alongside Buddhism and Shinto, although for long the recognition was virtual rather than legal. Official recognition came at a time when the Japanese government was more concerned to control religion. The Religious Bodies Law was put into effect in 1940, and gave official recognition to all groups with five thousand members and fifty established churches. The smaller groups were thus forced to affiliate with larger denominations.

The churches in Japan had been conscious of the problems arising from disunity, but it was government pressure which brought about a federation of several Protestant groups in 1941 into the Church of Christ in Japan. All denominational groups were declared illegal in 1942, and groups which did not enter the United Church could only register at the level of the local congregation; as organizations they were dissolved.

The post-war period resembled the first half of the Meiji Era inasmuch as it was a time of change and disruption of old patterns of behaviour and belief. Once again Christianity seemed to surge forward, and there was talk of the Christianization of the whole country. General MacArthur was himself concerned to encourage this general trend – which was not altogether an asset, as it gave the impression of being an imposition from

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without and seemed to contradict the legislation which moved towards complete freedom of religious expression and the divorce between religion and secular society. The General declared his own conviction in the words, 'Democracy is, I believe, here to stay, and this will be followed by the spread of Christianity, to which democracy is second.'¹ Christianity did have great opportunities, but it was essential that it should not have a favoured position. A shrewd critic is of the opinion that MacArthur's 'ill-advised effort to promote Christianity was a disservice both to that faith and to the cause of separation of "church" and state'.² But the opportunities came to the churches at a time when they were weakened by years of attrition, and economically unable to take on new responsibilities. The fact that they all turned once again to the former mother churches meant that, whilst technically local autonomy was maintained, a spirit of dependence returned, stunting the possibility of a true, indigenous initiative. With missionaries back in the country in large numbers – and new sectarian groups swelling the total – Christianity continued to give an appearance of foreign-ness, which did it a disservice at the time of the restoration of national independence in 1952. The stress on democratization also encouraged an overweighted bureaucracy in small churches. Bishop Yashiro, in speaking of the multiplication of organizations and committees, used the word

¹ Reported in *The Times*, 18th March 1947.

² W. P. Woodard, 'Religion-state relations in Japan: II', *Contemporary Japan*, XXIV (1956), pp. 640–76.

'*okuokasu*' – meaning 'adding one temporary structure on top of another temporary structure, then another and another, until the whole collapses'.¹ Being hide-bound by its organization, the Church often seems to lack the flexibility necessary for facing new challenges and new situations.

Like the Church in every other place, the Church in Japan is hardly perfect, and yet it has its assets. Amongst these may be included its indigenous character. Apart from the newer groups which are the fruit of the work of post-war sectarian missionaries, for the most part Japanese Christians are fully in control of the activities of the various denominational bodies, and, now that the suspicions of wartime and memories of enforced unification are gradually passing, there is a growing spirit of co-operation between the major Protestant groups in the National Christian Council. There is recognition, too, of the weakness of the Church's cultural impact, and increasing criticism of a mere academic theologizing. The Church in Japan possesses a well-trained ministry, which is becoming more aware of the need not only to build up converts in the soundness of the Christian faith, but also to come to grips with the realities of life in Japan and to appreciate all that is involved in nation-wide evangelism. Whilst there has been a tendency for Japanese theologians to be interpreters of western theology rather than original thinkers, and whilst, at times, their very diffidence has caused them to disclaim

¹ 'Evaluating the present', *Japan Christian Quarterly*, January 1960, p. 35.

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any originality, yet there are certainly new insights into the truth of Christianity now coming from the midst of the Japanese scene.¹ Conservatism – and that usually means a strong westernism – still marks forms of worship, church architecture, and church organization; and the Christian schools, whilst having greater numbers of students and a deeper impact than at any previous time in this century, still need to ask what are the fundamentals of a Christian education. Just as the Church must seek out the fullness of unity, so the school and university need to discover the meaning of wholeness and integration. But to say this is not to despise the fact that 60,000 university students and 80,000 high school pupils attend Christian institutions, and that 4,000 (fifty-two per cent) of the teachers in these institutions are Christians.

But the chief challenge to Christianity undoubtedly comes from the closely-knit character of Japanese society. In this respect, too, Christianity is essentially the non-mixer. The position in Japan is, of course, not peculiar, for in other countries, too, the Christian minority has tended to become an encysted group without any roots in general society and, at times, even having no contact with it at all. There would, for example, be more points of contact between Christian and non-Christian in Japan than in the Muslim world. It is still true, however, that there is a certain 'meaning-

¹ For an excellent introduction to Japanese theological thought, see C. Michalson, *Japanese Contributions to Christian Theology*, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1960.

lessness' in being a Christian within a *Dōzoku* society, where the traditional values are so different [As a result, as we have seen, the Church has gained most of its members at times of social upheaval and crisis, when the traditional patterns of society were threatened.] Or, again, within Japanese society, where communal interests are so strong, it has been the more individualistic types, themselves rebels against their own society, who have found their way into the churches. The churches have thus tended to cater for those who had no real relationship within the *Dōzoku* society – which has meant again that they have had no entry back into it.

The fact that the Christian Church is largely 'middle class' would indicate that it comprises almost an 'in-between' group, which does not fit into the traditional class categories. Hence we find some of the poets and novelists among the ranks of the Christians, their very romanticism or questioning attitude towards life leading them away from set groupings. There are also the critics of society and the revolutionaries, with the churches making their appeal to the same groups as Marxism, whether in its Socialist or Communist form. There are, in addition, the student classes, who are anxious for what the West can give, and for whom music, art and literature are the music, art and literature of the West. They are the universalists, who wish on occasions to de-Japonicize themselves – the people against whom Uchimura so vehemently inveighed.

If the Christian Church is truly to be present in Japan, and not simply to be a 'caller' at the '*genkan*' (doorway),

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it must meet with Japanese society. It must show how the Christian can be 'foreign' and yet 'not foreign'; for a Christian's daily existence to be 'meaningless' is to deny the Christian conviction that there is ultimate meaning in life through Christ. And *that* is the message which the Church is called to give – a message that embraces all – and everything, too.

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The Aftermath of War; Reaction of Shinto and Buddhism

>>> ♦ <<<

'I DISREGARDED the old morality with a clear conscience, and I will have as a result the satisfaction of a good baby.' 'Victims. Victims of a transitional period of morality, that is what we both certainly are. The revolution must be taking place somewhere, but the old morality persists unchanged in the world around us and lies athwart our way.' The speakers are a sister and a brother – characters in Osamu Dazai's novel, *The Setting Sun*,¹ in which he depicts very forcibly the disillusionment brought about by national defeat and the temptation on the part of many either to become the angry rebels against all tradition or to fall into a nihilism of despair. For the rebel the new liberties become an occasion for licence, and there is no place for values except for what brings relief from the anxieties of the age. Naoji, the brother, has been a soldier – and he finds that he cannot settle down in the new world, where the old patterns of behaviour no longer obtain. There is too much individualism in him to permit of a ready accommodation – and despair leads to a suicide's death. 'I

¹ Engl. trans., London, Peter Owen, 1958.

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cannot think of the slightest reason why I should have to go on living. Only those who wish to go on living should . . .¹ he asserts. 'I am better off dead. I haven't the capacity to stay alive.'² . . . I have no room for hope.'³ It is not without significance that Dazai's writings are extremely popular in Japan – for he speaks existentially to modern Japan's real situation – and he wrote, too, from the experience of his own inner wrestlings and defeats. Dazai himself died a suicide's death in 1948. *No Longer Human*⁴ reflects his own descent to the bestial, being driven by the feeling that man's inhumanity was so often directed against man, and that insincerity and hypocrisy were the norm of social behaviour. Christianity has its appeal for him, but here, too, faith eluded him. The hell of his own existence made it easy for him to believe in hell, but there is no heaven on the soul's horizon. And so the book's chief character – so true of Dazai himself – says, 'I could believe in hell, but it was not possible for me to believe in the existence of heaven.'⁵

This type of approach is, of course, not universal (for there is plenty of naturalistic this-worldly affirmation), but the widespread forms of escapist pursuits would suggest that the Dazais of modern Japan speak for quite a segment of the intelligentsia, who are by no means few in a country that has more than half a million university students. Such people will receive little help either from the older established religions or from the

¹ Ibid., p. 165.

² Ibid., p. 171.

³ Ibid., p. 181.

⁴ Engl. trans., 1959.

⁵ Ibid., p. 103.

newer faiths, which they despise as popular superstitions. Intellectuals are ashamed to confess any faith. Religion for them will mean little more than an occasional service for ceremonial. Statistics are as ever unreliable, and yet they speak of more than sixty per cent of the inhabitants of the large cities having little or no interest. Nation-wide figures would suggest that ninety per cent have some family religious affiliation, and that seventy per cent either have some faith or admit the value of a religious belief – but of the student class barely one in six will profess any kind of religious conviction. It has been suggested that the reason for this is that few Japanese ever attempt to co-ordinate religion with reason and knowledge. As a result, the intellectual curiosity which is so marked in other departments of life has no place in religious interests. It is commonly accepted that religion is essentially irrational, with the result that the common people will suspect the intellectual in the name of religion or tradition, whilst the intellectual will spurn religion in the name of reason. A Roman Catholic indicates this tendency: 'For long the prevailing attitude of the intelligentsia was one of amused tolerance. There are signs that it is changing into one of grim contempt not only for the more repulsive manifestations of popular religion in Japan, but of religious phenomena as such.'¹ They will reject any suggestion of an absolute, and question the relevance of religion for the rest of human activities. Even the

¹ Joseph Roggendorf, 'The place of religion in modern Japan', *Japan Quarterly*, January 1958, p. 24.

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interested intellectual may display little more than a dilettante attitude, somewhat reminiscent of the Japan of twelve hundred years ago, when, for many of the court nobility, Indian metaphysical language was a fashionable jargon, Buddhist rites little more than a spectacle, and the writing of Chinese poetry, expressive of ethical qualities or aesthetic appreciation, something of an intellectual game.

With faith divorced from reason, there is no question of absolute truth or historicity. It is the relative value of a faith which is considered – and the criterion of value is itself pragmatic or utilitarian. Where claim is made to religious truth – with a corresponding denial of relativism pure and simple – a charge of intolerance will soon be made. But this relativism is not asserted with logical exactitude, for most Japanese will still base their lives upon the presupposition that there is an ultimate unity – even though there is little or no examination of the validity of this presupposition. The world of science is felt to be far removed from the world of religion. A sociologist writes: 'Science means the pursuit of truth in our actual lives; religion, the pursuit of illusion.'¹ None the less he shows a nostalgic desire for what he terms 'illusion'. Religion may be 'pie in the sky' – but celestial pastry can provide psychological well-being and ward off feelings of inner frustration! Even illusions have their value, he feels, and, in lamenting the fact that 'the Buddhism of our ancestors has lost its vitality'

¹ Masamune Hakucho, 'Thoughts on the New Religions', *Chuo Koron*, July 1956 (trans. in *Japan Quarterly*, Jan. 1957, p. 66).

and that 'Christianity does not seem to flourish in Japanese soil', he still cries out, 'We do not know but that this very age of science may yet produce a new Christ, or a new Buddha, whose function it will be to weave for us a new world of illusion in a truly altruistic attempt to save the multitudes of mankind!' Professor Nishitani of Kyoto University also feels that the traditional religions have become separated from actual life: 'The traditional religions have become alienated from actualities and have ceased to work vitally in our social and mental life.'¹ Christianity is often accused of having no contact with 'the soil and climate of the Japanese people's mentality'. Rinzo Shiina is a popular writer, once a Communist, but for the past six years a Christian – and he feels that Christianity in Japan has been 'the property of a few intelligent people'. But such people now turn to Communism, which they interpret as a humanitarian altruism, whilst the masses turn to the New Religions. He asserts that 'Christianity in Japan may aptly be expressed as something which is floating in the air, something neither on earth nor in heaven'.²

But alongside the doubts and the criticisms of the intellectuals, there is still popular religion, which is usually unsophisticated and traditional in its expression. The stress may be upon community and family rather than upon the individual – but the religions still play their part. *Shrine Shinto*, seemingly discredited as a

¹ 'The religious situation in present-day Japan', *Contemporary Religions in Japan*, March 1960, p. 13.

² R. Shiina, 'The Japanese people and "indigenous Christianity"', *Japanese Religions*, I.2 (1959), p. 20.

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result of Japan's defeat, and deprived of its authoritative position and much of its financial backing, has still persisted and, in fact, has gained new strength. For the majority of its adherents it is little more than a loyalty and reverence towards the familiar and the conventional. It is not the mythology of Shinto which is important for them but the social cohesiveness that it gives – the feeling of belonging – of oneness with man and nature in a world which speaks so actively of division and disintegration. It is the functional relevance of the shrine which is important: it symbolizes the nation – and makes the average man feel that there is a familiar foothold in the flood of strange modernity. At the shrine or at his own *kamidana* he is conscious too of historic continuity. It is his instinctive searching for unity that makes him flock to the festival: he would be one with the community. He has no desire to be an *Athanasius contra mundum*. Far too many speak already of the Japanese as the 'orphans of Asia'.

Amongst the Shinto leaders there are those who may be termed 'traditional fundamentalists', who seek simply for a reinstatement of Shinto as the national faith, and who agitate for a special status for Ise as *the* national shrine par excellence, but they still seek to modernize to the extent of providing Shinto with a modern philosophy. They stress the importance of the marriage of religion and politics (*saisei itchi*) and the need of still looking upon politics as *matsurigoto* (literally, 'ritual matter'). The Emperor, for them, is still the essential mediator between the Kami and man, the source of harmony

through his own priestly ritual observances. But over against this approach is the more liberal Shinto of those who look for intellectual respectability and an interpretation of their traditional faith suitable for a scientific age. At the first flood of western culture in the nineteenth century, the ideal of Christianization was confused with that of westernization and modernization. Because many of the progressive Japanese intellectuals, as we have seen, became Christians, sometimes through the mistaken belief that that was the way towards modernization, it was natural that Shinto leaders – as well as many of the Buddhists – should resist westernization and modernization along with it. But this resistance to modernization has proved a losing battle, and so the religions themselves now seek a modern form. Though the festival may be traditional in its form, a wholly new interpretation is given. Some would even go further, and, while recognizing the fundamentally national character of Shinto, through a symbolizing of the traditional mythology seek to give the religion a new universalist appeal. Some of the Kami, we are told, have a special claim for worship on the Japanese alone, and so such aspects of Shinto could not be disseminated abroad. But other elements are said to be of universal validity. Professor Kato speaks of Shinto as 'groping along the way towards the achievement of a world-wide, universal nature'.¹ The notion of the Divine Absolute has emerged as the unifying principle of the eight millions of Kami. This deity, the *Daigenshin* ('Great Original Deity') resembles Brahma

¹ *Shinto in Essence*, Tokyo, 1954, p. 5.

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in Indian religion, who is held to embrace within his person the many deities of the Vedas. But even so 'god' and 'man' are still felt to be co-terminous terms: 'god' does not transcend man in the relationship of Creator to creature. 'The deity is immanent in man and man is inherent in the deity; there is neither the divine nor the human; there is no difference in essence at all between them',¹ writes Professor Kato. According to a young Shinto scholar, the core of Shinto belief is the communal religious experience accumulated in the actual lives of the Japanese for many centuries, and so there is place for a 'theology of development'. The traditional mythology limits itself to Japan because of the limitations of knowledge of the ancient Japanese. The divinity of the Emperor should be derived not from mythology, but from a view of man as sacred, as his life is lived in obedience to the divine will. It is admitted generally that even Shinto priests may be ignorant of the precise nature of Shinto – but apologists would speak of the thrill of joy 'as one enters into a grove which surrounds a shrine' and 'an exhilaration unimagined by those who do not enter into the spirit of the occasion', which is felt by participants in a festival, or assert that 'the Kami-faith is caught not taught'.² 'The world of the Kami does not transcend that of man', we are told, 'and man does not need to seek to enter a divine, transcendental world to attain salvation. He seeks salvation by bringing the Kami into the human world, into the daily life of

¹ *Shinto's Terra Incognita to be Explored yet*, Japan, Gotemba, 1958, p. 14.

² S. Ono, *The Kami Way*, pp. 93-4.

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the home, the market place. . . .¹ And central to man's life must be the virtue of sincerity (*makoto*) –

*What is Shinto? Not
In the shrines the worldly minded
Frequent for gifts
In vain, but in good deeds, pure
Of heart, lies real religion.*²

We may inquire, too, what the *Buddhist* has to say to the modern situation? It would be facetious to say that there are as many replies as there are Buddhists – but there is certainly no united voice. We have already had cause to question the extent to which Buddhism has infiltrated Japanese life – and to speak of Japan as a Buddhist country, whilst being a half-truth, could lead to misunderstanding. The fact that millions of homes have a *Butsudan* is said to be evidence that the Japanese are Buddhist, but the *Butsudan* is often little more than an expression of family loyalty and is no indication of religious piety. There is also a wide difference of opinion as to what is Buddhist and what is not. Because most still act somewhat unconsciously in accordance with past customs,³ to understand Japanese Buddhism it is necessary to live with them and speak with them; it is not sufficient merely to quote the sutras or the writings of the founders of the Japanese sects. Nor is it sufficient to question contemporary Buddhist scholars and leaders, although they do at times try to bridge the gulf between

¹ Ibid., p. 107.

² G. Kato, *Shinto in Essence*, p. 18.

³ Cf. H. Nakamura, *Introduction to Living Buddhism*, Tokyo, 1959, the Introduction.

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themselves and the masses. The scholar is so often individualistic, content with his own sophisticated approach. His existential assertion that 'nothing exists but each passing moment and we can only say that the past and the future are continuations of the present' or the relativity of such an explanation as 'We cannot say whether there is or is not a world after death – to a man who thinks that there is, it exists; while it does not exist to a man who does not think so'¹ does not help the seeker for a gospel. Nearly thirty years ago Professor Kishimoto spoke of the ill heritage of organized Buddhism – 'Ecclesiastical Buddhism still retains much of the indolence it acquired during the past three centuries. It is too much divided into minor sects. Each branch is too pre-occupied with the subtleties of its own ancient teaching to have a truly wide view and to feel the delicate problems of the modern age.'² (It is salutary to say that the following sentence was appended: '*The same defects have been very apparent in the Christian sects in Japan.*') This judgement would not need revision today, as the religious freedom of the post-war period has led to a greater splintering of sects, whilst the agrarian reforms have impoverished the temples, and made many priests even more the slaves of economic necessities. Whereas they should be the mediators between the popular adherents and the Buddhist intelligentsia who look askance at organized Buddhism and favour a 'back to Buddha' movement, the fact that

¹ Ibid., p. 42.

² 'The task of Buddhism', *Journal of Religion*, XIV (1934), p. 78.

they must look to economics means that they side with the populace, though rejecting the superstition and the Shamanism which they are forced to condone. Even before the war, Buddhism had been said to be 'on trial with regard to its ability to solve the problems cast by the modern age'¹; its present weakness may perhaps lie in the fact that it has apparently no prophetic message. It does not seem to challenge the situation – and so there is little desire to explore what Buddhism essentially is. What influence Buddhism exercises will be largely in the sphere of culture and art – and its power through international connections to give Japan a relatedness with others and an escape from isolation, which she so earnestly desires. It is interesting in this matter that, whereas, at one time, Japanese Buddhist apologists tended to emphasize the superiority of Maha-yana Buddhism over Hina-yana, there is now a tendency to minimize the difference and assert the fundamental unity of all Buddhists. This is, of course, more due to the fact that the countries of the southern Buddhist tradition are witnessing a Buddhist renaissance as the concomitant of their nationalism than to the new discovery of close doctrinal affinities!

But we can see in modern Buddhism a more positive note as well, for its exponents are not entirely unmindful of the soteriological note, which makes of Buddhism a religion rather than a philosophy. The tensions of the day emphasize the urgency of this message of salvation. The Patriarch of one of the two major divisions of Shin

¹ H. Kishimoto, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

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Buddhism, in one of his sermons, stresses that this salvation can only come from without:

How can we find true salvation? How can we solve this problem [the problem of human passions]? Man, whose knowledge is limited, cannot produce a satisfactory answer to this problem. We can never discover by pure intellectual knowledge a way to wipe out all afflictions. Of course, in ordinary daily life money, medicine, or good deeds may solve immediate problems. But the fundamental suffering and anxiety of human existence cannot be eliminated by our feeble activities. Man is quite helpless and incapable of resolving the problems of existence through his own power. Man is filled with passions and desires which becloud his insight and restrain his efforts. Only in the power of the Buddha which transcends man is there to be found salvation. . . . Just as a babe must be tended by its mother, so we too gain salvation through the compassion of the Buddha of Infinite Mercy. Because the Buddha presents eternal life to us, his compassion is the foundation upon which we can build a noble life. . . . This power [sc. the power of the Main Vow of Amida] which transcends all relative and limited things is eternal and unlimited, and because by it all limited things are saved, it is called salvation by a power outside of them. . . . The faith which looks up to the benevolence of the Buddha becomes a fountainhead of power for living the good life. Though we live in an existence filled with suffering and passion, yet in the power of our faith that we live in Buddha's mercy and compassion, we find hope, strength and encouragement.¹

The Christian reader cannot help but recall St Paul's outburst in Romans:

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the

¹ Kosho Otani, *Sermons on Shin Buddhism*, pp. 14-15.

body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. . . . For the law of the Spirit of life in Jesus Christ has made me free from the law of sin and death . . .

(Rom. 7.24–5; 8.2).

St Paul, too, speaks of the impossible having been effected through the grace and the love that have been granted him. Just as for the Shin worshipper *karma* has not been wiped out, but is there all the time, though now powerless to affect him, so the Christian realizes that, though he has not already attained, the victory to overcome the world is granted through faith (cf. I John 5.4). The veteran Japanese Buddhist scholar, Daisetsu Suzuki, writes of the *Myōkōnin* ('wondrously happy men'), who are distinguished by their good-heartedness, unworldliness and piousness. They are not the clever of this world: 'They do not argue, they are not intellectually demonstrative, they just go on practising what they have innerly experienced. When they express themselves at all, they are unaffected, their words come directly from their inmost hearts and refer directly to the truth of their faith. This is really what Shin Buddhism claims to do for its followers.'¹ A country woman of sixty gave instructions to her son as he left for Tokyo, expressing her deep faith:

*I thought it was all due to my self-power,
That [the Nembutsu] was uttered;
But it was not so, it all came from the power of Oya*
[‘parent’]

¹ D. T. Suzuki, *A Miscellany on the Shin Teaching of Buddhism*, p. 71.

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*What I was imagining to be the other-power
Was no other than the self-power itself.
Wishing to shun the evil path
And ever hoping for the Pure Land –
The very thought was no other than the self-power*

*All was given fully and freely.
How grateful I am now! Namu-amida-butsu!*

*The Nembutsu I uttered, I thought, was my own,
But it was not, it was Amida's call.
How grateful indeed I am! Namu-amida-butsu!*

*Day in, day out, I am with Amida;
Let the sun set whenever it pleases,
How grateful indeed I am! Namu-amida-butsu!¹*

Whilst the Buddhist philosopher will, undoubtedly, uphold the impersonal character of the Dharma, manifested in Amida, yet it is questionable whether a philosophical explanation will do justice to the actual piety of an Amida-believer.

Mrs Sasaki, who is a Zen priestess in Kyoto, stresses the religious character of Zen, and so points to the deep religious consciousness of the devout Zen Buddhist. All existence is thought of as the totality of Life – Life which is Infinite – without beginning and without end. *Satori* consists in the recognition that that is man's true nature. But *satori* is not to be gained for oneself alone; it involves responsibility towards others, and the three basic attitudes are depicted as 'infinite gratitude to all beings in the past, infinite gratitude and infinite service

¹ Ibid., pp. 72–4.

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to all beings in the present and infinite responsibility to all beings in the future'.¹ This triple responsibility is recalled at the daily repetition of the Four Vows:

*Sentient beings are numberless;
I take a vow to save them all.
Delusions are inexhaustible;
I take a vow to destroy them all.
The gates of Dharma are manifold;
I take a vow to enter them all.
The Buddha-way is supreme;
I take a vow to complete it.*²

Zen may stress self-understanding and self-reliance, as contrasted with Shin's emphasis upon the 'other', but both the path to *satori* and the way to dependence upon Amida involve the existential leap of faith – the commitment from which there is no return.

¹ R. F. Sasaki, *Zen: A Religion*, p. 21.

² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

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The New Religions



THE crisis of the present age has been well described by Professor Toynbee:

In our time, all traditional ideologies, philosophies, and faiths have been shaken off their pedestal by the explosive intellectual force of modern science; and Japan's traditional ideology, like all the others, would have been undermined by the progress of science if it had not been shattered by the shock of military disaster. . . . All mankind is now in search of new foundations for its spiritual life. If Japan has temporarily lost her way, she has lost it in company with all the rest of the world. . . . The catastrophe [of the war] seems to have produced a sort of moral and spiritual vacuum which will surely have to be filled.¹

Dr Stanley Jones, describing this vacuum, said, 'In Japan not only the door is open [sc. for Christianity] — even the walls are not there.' Japan's New Religions have come rushing into this vacuum, and no consideration of the present-day religious situation would be complete without seeking to estimate their significance and to discover the secret of their vitality.

¹ A. Toynbee, 'The role of Japan in world history', *Japan Quarterly*, IV.1 (January 1957), p. 19.

Whilst the name 'New Religions' should technically be applied to those that have arisen in the past thirty years or so, and particularly in the post-war period, not all the one hundred and twenty-six (or more) referred to as 'New Religions' belong to this category. The name is often used to cover what were known as the Shinto Sects in the pre-war days, when free association was not always permitted, and sects were forced to assimilate their doctrines and practices to traditional Shinto, whilst many are splinter groups from established Buddhist denominations. None the less, the religious freedom of the post-war period has enabled even the older of the New Religions to develop in new ways and to apply themselves to the new situations. They are commonly called crisis religions, because they meet an immediate need, but many of them are continuing to grow and show no sign of merely having fulfilled a temporary expediency.

It would be true to say that religions such as Tenrikyō and Konkōkyō, which date from the middle of nineteenth century, met a real need from the start. The end of the Tokugawa period was a time when the official religions were at a low ebb and when economic circumstances made the lot of the peasant particularly hard, and the authoritarianism of Tokugawa rule gave little hope of redress. The New Religions claimed to give a revelatory word, the possibility of a new corporateness and a way of escape from the *nayami* (troubles) of daily life. Personal faith and dependence have been emphasized in many of the New Religions and 'faith-healing' is a common feature of their operation. Tenrikyō and Kon-

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kōkyō, together with Kurozumikyō, founded in 1814, are commonly called the Peasant Sects, because their appeal has been largely to the peasant classes, in the first instance, and then to the working classes of the large cities. The majority of the New Religions appeal to the same classes, except that a few (such as Perfect Liberty Kyōdan, Seichō no Ie, and Sekaikyūseikyō) also draw upon the middle classes. In most cases, too, the founders or foundresses have been men and women of little educational background.

There seems to be a close parallel with the religious crisis of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. At that time a somewhat arid Buddhist scholasticism had been challenged by the logic-destroying impact of Zen, and the formal, decadent worship of the older sects had given place to the gospel of the Pure Land and Nichiren sects, which emphasized the need for faith in something beyond oneself – whether in Amida or the Lotus Sutra. The Buddhism of that period had sought to bring salvation within the reach of the ordinary people. The age was one of uncertainty, strife and suffering, and people were looking for a way of life. It was then that Buddhism could become truly indigenous. As we have already seen (in Ch. 3), the Kamakura sects were the revival and prophetic movements of their day. Even so, the New Religions have come at a time when traditional faiths, despite certain reform movements within them, seem too wedded to the past to give a message for the immediate present.

In this connection the vitality of Buddhist lay move-

ments should be particularly noted. Three of the strongest of the New Religions¹ are linked with the Nichiren tradition, but they are almost militantly anti-clerical. The absence of hierarchical distinctions makes them attractive to the modern Japanese, and also makes the individual believer conscious of his obligation to propagate the faith. They have a keen missionary interest, and the extensive building programmes in which so many engage give their members a feeling that they belong to 'going concerns'! One group² is particularly vigorous in training its adherents as shock troops for the task of proselytizing. It is not surprising, then, to find that they have increased their membership to more than four millions since 1951, that they even fight in nation-wide elections, and have caused the trade unions to see their greatest danger in the New Religions. An interesting question is whether such New Religions from the Buddhist tradition will be the means of revivifying traditional Buddhism. Will their protest lead to a reform movement within Buddhism, just as the Protestant Reformation led to the vigour of the Counter-Reformation and the energetic Jesuit missions in our western Christian history?

Then, again, the old faiths seem to depend upon complicated rituals and ceremonies, in which the ordinary person cannot participate. The New Religions have sought to simplify ritual and ceremonial and put religious observance within the reach of all. By contrast

¹ Reiyūkai, Risshōkōseikai and Sōka Gakkai. See the Word-List for a brief sketch of these religions.

² Sōka Gakkai.

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with the churches, where worship often seems to be over-intellectualized, the New Religions incorporate the physical and the emotional to a much greater degree. To attend a service in the main shrine at Tenri¹ is to witness corporate worship, in which all are active participants.

It is felt, too, that the old religions belong to the cultural patterns of a past age. The New Religions do not provide a complete and absolute novelty; there is sufficient of the old (whether of Shinto or Buddhist practices and belief) to provide them with an air of familiarity; but they are prepared to draw upon newer traditions as well, whether Christianity or some more esoteric diffused gnosticism. 'They are a socio-religious movement of a Japan in transition. . . . They depict the struggle of a nation which is fighting for spiritual survival.'² From a Christian point of view, it is significant that their very readiness to draw upon Christianity and even to approximate their doctrine to Christian views of God and man has also contributed to the breaking down of age-long prejudices against Christianity.

Christian influence on the New Religions is particularly marked as they seek to formulate their doctrinal positions. One,³ at the start, seemed to teach a polytheism in which ten gods (mainly from traditional Shinto) functioned, but now their deity⁴ is proclaimed as the

¹ The headquarters of Tenrikyō. The town is named after the religion.

² T. Jaeckel, 'Psychological and sociological approaches to Japan's New Religions', *Japanese Religions*, II.1 (Kyoto, 1960), p. 11.

³ Tenrikyō ('Religion of Heavenly Wisdom').

⁴ Tenri-Ō-no-mikoto ('The Lord of Heavenly Wisdom').

only true God, and the 'ten deities' are held to be simply attributes or functions of the One God. Another¹ regards God as Creator and Preserver of all mankind, whilst another² uses the actual term 'Messiah' and speaks of the establishment of a 'Paradise' upon earth. Still another³ regards its foundress as a John the Baptist and her associate as the Christ, whilst one,⁴ which quotes freely from the Old and New Testaments in its writings, will at times even rebuke Christians for 'misunderstanding' their own scriptures!

The newer religions are essentially syncretistic and will often reflect the spiritual pilgrimage of their founders. One,⁵ for example, incorporates the numbers 'three' and 'five' into the writing of its name, the 'three' signifying the three religions which had been a formative influence on the founder, and the 'five' representing five great world religions – Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism.

We have had cause to emphasize the place of the leader in the general ethos of Japan's religious laboratory – a man or woman (for women have come once more into their own in the New Religions, many of which look to a foundress) who can be respected and who will arouse the devotion of his or her followers. This aspect

¹ Konkōkyō. ('Religion of Golden Light').

² Sekaikyūseikyō ('Religion of World Messianity').

³ Ōmoto ('Great Foundation').

⁴ Seichō no Ie ('House of Growth').

⁵ Ananaikyō ('Religion of Ananai') – the latter being represented as 'three' + 'five'. *Ananai* was the hemp rope which hung from a Shinto shrine – the symbol of the link between the deity and man.

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is very marked amongst the New Religions, all of which have strong personalities, many of whom claim divine possession and so profess to give a valid word of authority. They would claim to be 'mediators' or 'the living Temple' of the deity. Dr Watanabe would lay stress on this claim to give divine revelation: 'It is not so much the contents of these revelations which attract people to these new religions, but rather the mere fact that a revelation has happened, that the gulf between the material world and the spirit world has been bridged by the spirits themselves, which is something so extraordinary to the man in the street that he cannot help being fascinated by it.'¹ The fact that the revelation comes to this world also speaks against a dualism between spirit and matter; there is a full-blooded affirmation of this world and an acceptance of the natural. Where so much of religion appears to be a movement from man to God, it is this thought of God moving to man which is so arresting. Is not this at the heart of the Christian gospel? Is the fact that it comes as such a novelty to so many a reflection of the ineffectiveness of much Christian preaching?

But, apart from the message, there is the personality of the founder or foundress. Many of the leaders demonstrate a marked humility and a fortitude in the face of persecution and misunderstanding. They also demonstrate faithfulness in the pastoral guidance of their followers. There have been many 'quack faiths', but they have soon fallen by the wayside, and the Japanese

¹ B. Watanabe, 'Modern Japanese Religions', *Monumenta Nipponica*, XIII (1957), p. 159.

have traditionally valued 'sincerity' (as we have seen, Shinto's basic virtue).

The gospel which is preached, however, must have the 'signs following' – and so many of the founders or religions will lay claim to miraculous powers. One¹ claims to eliminate sickness, poverty and war from the world and to transform it into an earthly paradise. A materialistic culture is to be replaced with a religious one, and God's intentions for the world are to be fulfilled. The believers, as they come to Atami or Hakone,² see the magnificent grounds and gardens, the art galleries and museums, and feel that they already see 'heaven upon earth'. But the problems of the individual are not overlooked; here, too, there seems to be a solution. It is to cling to God with single-hearted devotion – 'Have faith in God instead of worrying. . . . Heaven and earth are your home!' Similarly the Tenrikyō worshipper looks to the Jiba (the supposed centre of the world and source of creation) at Tenri. He is filled with awe at the magnificent buildings, the token of the mighty city of the future, and is conscious that the 'heavenly dew' will descend upon the *kanrodai* (the central pillar of the main shrine), bringing in the kingdom of peace and security. But, even at present, there is the benevolent spirit of the Foundress hovering about the precincts, ever ready to point to the bounty of God the Parent.

The New Religion also restores the solidarity of the group for those who have experienced the break-up of

¹ Sekaikyūseikyō.

² The chief centres of Sekaikyūseikyō.

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the old family system. The Japanese, accustomed to communal patterns, have never had to live before as individuals. In the fellowship of the New Religion the lonely individual finds a new warmth and the meaning of community at a deeper level. But he is not simply left in a position of dependence: he has a part to play, a piece of work to do. There is the *hinokishin* (voluntary work) in Tenrikyō, the social work in Reiyūkai, and so on. One by one the believer finds that his problems seem to be settled and his inner tensions resolved. He has the faith to persevere, and, what is more, his new activist approach to religion means that he has less time for morbid introspection. The prosperous business man, too, can even take his exercise at the golf courses on the grounds of the Perfect Liberty Kyōdan headquarters, and feel that he is realizing to the full that 'Life is Art' and that being is realized in activity.

But, still more, the New Religions have given to their adherents the feeling that they are human personalities, and, as such, possess value. The possibility of self-transcendence is presented; a task is to be accomplished; a goal is to be attained. The demand upon them makes them feel both at one within themselves and also that they are drawn within a wider whole. As much here is what the Christian Gospel would seek to offer, the Christian is forced to think out what is the distinctive thing which he has to give, which is still lacking within the New Religions.

The success of these religions speaks also of the demand for *relevance* on the part of the Japanese. They

will accept no deistic God. God, if God there be, must make his ways known within the world, and come into the midst of human affairs and deal with the human predicament. The tolerance which marks all, except for Sōka Gakkai and Tenshō-kōtai-jingu-kyō, speaks of the preservation of contradictions and tensions. Pastor Jaeckel suggests that Christianity too must be ready to integrate the truth within the new religions – and that Christianity will ‘not appeal to the Japanese unless it preserves the treasure of Buddhist wisdom, Shinto optimism, and the Confucianist order of peace’.¹ Unfortunately, the dialogue with the New Religions is not yet taking place, although they point so forcibly to the as-yet-unfulfilled aspirations of the Japanese soul. Instead, the attitude of the churches has often been negative. An example of this attitude is the reluctance of the Christians to explore the possibilities of ‘faith healing’ because of its place in the New Religions. The Holiness churches, which have given a place to healing in the gospel, have sometimes appeared to the Japanese as New Religions. As a result, they have been most effective in their evangelism among those classes that the regular churches have not infiltrated. The Christians of the regular denominations come largely from those sections of the community where the New Religions tend to be despised.

¹ T. Jaeckel, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

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Communism in Japan

It is of interest that a Japanese study on the New Religions in Japan includes a chapter in which the ideals and methods of the New Religions are compared with those of Communism. The Messianic message of Communism is, of course, an obvious link – and the attempt to establish a ‘Kingdom upon the earth’ is very similar to the ideal of religions such as Sekaikyūseikyō, Ananaikyō, P. L. Kyōdan, etc., etc. As we have seen (Ch. 6), the Japanese are essentially ideologists, looking for a comprehensive plan for the totality of life – and Communism has its appeal here. Although aware empirically of the rivalries and tensions within the bureaucratic organization of all political parties (including the Communist Party), adherents of Communism still seem to think that, if only the Communists were in power, all would be well, and the very organization would be somehow redeemed!

In the immediate post-war period the Communists had a temporary popularity, as they alone could claim either to have been imprisoned or to have been in active opposition to the pre-war militarists. Until 1950 there was an attempt to work for ‘peaceful revolution’ and a ‘lovable Communist Party’ and to give the impression that the Communist Party had abandoned any thought of using violence. Traditional links with the Soviets were not emphasized, and Communism sought to operate on a more national line, working towards a

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popular front with the Socialists. As a result, by 1949 a tenth of the total vote in the elections was given to the Communist candidates, whilst the membership of the party rose to 100,000. This policy, however, was condemned in 1950 as 'anti-democratic' and 'anti-Socialist' – and a more militant anti-American standpoint was taken. The Communists in Japan were prepared to play their part in 'the international revolutionary movement'. With the slogans of 'peace' and 'national independence', the Communists have entered into the Peace Movements, which are very vocal, as large numbers of Japanese do feel that Japan has a mission in the world to fight for peace, and have also fostered any discontent with the continued presence of foreign forces in Japan. There are, however, two groups within the Party leadership – the 'main group' who, whilst accepting links with international Communism, are more attracted to the Chinese pattern¹ and press for a national approach to Communism, and the 'Internationalists' who are less anxious for relations with the social democratic forces. Since 1953, the change in Soviet policies has been reflected in Japan – with a stress on peaceful co-existence and a policy of gradualism. In 1956 Nozaka, the veteran leader, stressed that 'the path from capitalism to socialism is certainly not the same everywhere. China indeed won national independence through force of arms . . . but we believe it incorrect to reason that

¹ There is great interest generally in China, and little criticism. The churches in Japan have also been influenced by the stress in China upon independence, self-support and self-propagation.

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therefore a revolution in Japan will have to follow the same pattern. . . .'¹

There are about 125,000 members of the Communist Party, of whom about one-third are in Tokyo, and more than a half in the largest cities. The fluctuation in the vote at time of election is due to the fact that the left-wing of the Socialist Party is much nearer the Communist position than in countries of the West. In 1957 Nozaka was invited to address the Socialist congress, and the two parties agree on a number of issues, opposing revision of the Peace Constitution and working for a neutralist policy. In 1949 the Communists received almost three million votes, but their present voting strength is about one million. The strength of Marxism is largely amongst the intellectuals, the teachers and the trade unions. The vast majority of Japanese intelligentsia and labour leaders accept the Marxist view of the class struggle and the inevitable decline and downfall of capitalism. There is a tremendous interest also in literary circles. In 1956 the second-best-seller was a book called *Why is dialectics a science?*, whilst *Political Economy* (issued by the USSR Academy of Sciences) sold a million copies within a year of its publication in translation in 1955.

The appeal of Communism to the student classes is, in part, its apparent altruism and emphases on peace and equality, but largely its claim to be a science. Where

¹ Quoted in Paul F. Langer, 'Communism in independent Japan', part of *Japan Between East and West*, New York, Harper and Bros., 1957 (p. 52).

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the religions seem to speak of irrationalism and of the pre-scientific age, Communism comes as the 'new religion' for the 'irreligious' – and yet, though accepted in the name of rationality, the attachment is far more emotional than logical, of faith than of reason. But Communism, once again, is the only one of the 'new religions' which will face up to the implications of the break-up of the old patterns of society and which seems to give a new pattern for the future.¹

¹ For further details of the present-day political situation, the following books are particularly valuable: R. Swearington and P. F. Langer, *Red Flag in Japan*, Harvard University Press, 1952; P. F. Langer and others, *Japan Between East and West* (publ. for Council on Foreign Relations), New York, Harper and Bros., 1957; London, OUP, 1958; Nobutake Ike, *Japanese Politics*, New York, Knoff, 1957; London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1958; R. Storry, *A History of Modern Japan* (esp. Ch. 11), Penguin Books, 1960; Jean Stoetzel, *Without the Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, London, Heinemann, 1955; Evelyn S. Colbert, *The Left Wing in Japanese Politics*, New York, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1952; London, Allen and Unwin, 1952; I. I. Morris, *Nationalism and the Right Wing in Japan*, London, OUP, 1960.

The Philosopher's Stone



A FOURTEENTH-CENTURY *Miscellany of a Japanese Priest* contains the following delightful story:

Once when I was eight years of age I asked my father, 'What sort of person is a Buddha?' And my father made answer, 'A Buddha is what a man grows into.'

So I questioned him further, 'And what must a man do to grow into a Buddha?' My father replied again, 'He grows into it after having been taught by a Buddha.'

Once more I inquired, 'But who instructed the Buddha who teaches him?' And he answered, 'He also grew into it by the instruction of a previous Buddha.'

So I asked yet again, 'But the very first Buddha of all who began this teaching, what sort of a Buddha was he?' And at that my father smiled and said, 'Oh, no doubt he fell down from heaven, or perhaps sprang up from the earth.'¹

'Oh, no doubt he fell down from heaven. . . .' These words bring us to our final chapter, for the Philosopher's Stone eludes the worker within the laboratory. The search of many a mediaeval alchemist was without avail; and the search is still carried on within Japan's religious laboratory. But the Christian affirms that the stone

¹ Tsure-zure Gusa, *A Miscellany of a Japanese Priest*, tr. W. N. Porter, London, OUP, 1914, p. 184.

must be the 'living stone' (I Peter 2.4) – the stone which comes from heaven:

The stone which the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.
This is the LORD's doing;
it is marvellous in our eyes.

(Ps. 118.22–3, RSV)

The Psalmist is here concerned to emphasize that it is no human creation; the validity of this stone depends upon the fact that it comes from God and has its source of being in God.

To say that the true religious solution is not man-made, but the result of divine action, must involve a condemnation of an easy-going relativism which thinks of a religion as something created and moulded by man. It would seem to condemn too any scheme for a comprehensive enfolding of all religions into one.

There are, however, those who say that even the assertion that all is dependent upon the divine initiative permits of a syncretic approach, since all religions must to some degree or other witness to the one God. Can the Christian assert, 'Buddhist temples, Shinto shrines, Christian churches, all merged into one.

*They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.'*¹

Is all that is necessary simply a 'get-together' of religions, and the creation of an over-all unity? –

¹ J. B. Pratt, *The Pilgrimage of Buddhism*, p. 750.

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*United come, united speak, let our spirits agree,
Let your efforts united be, united your hearts!
Let your spirits united be, by which you are divinely
bound.*

*Peace, peace, peace!*¹

This kind of approach would be found in 'Ittōen' ('The Garden of One Light') – a community movement near Kyoto, which was founded by the saintly Tenkō Nishida, and which seeks to show that 'in having nothing lies inexhaustible wealth'. The members of Ittōen believe that the One God to be worshipped is to be seen in the truth of all religions – and this conviction is shown in the symbol of the movement. It is a swastika (the common symbol of Buddhism), the 'teeth' of which form a circle, in the centre of which there is a cross, whilst the sun is in the background. The idea thus symbolized is that, as the rays of light shine upon Buddhism and Christianity, the two melt into one and form a circle of harmony. It is the single and indivisible Light which is the object of worship, and everything of truth and value is contained within it. Part of the daily prayer of the community, which is drawn from many religious groups, accordingly incorporates the petitions: 'Let us be born anew and have our being by the providence of the Light. Teach us to worship the essence of all religions, and help us to learn the one ultimate truth.'²

¹ From an ancient Indian hymn, quoted by Max Müller at the International Oriental Congress in London in 1874.

² For an excellent description of Ittōen, see the article by Harry Thomsen in *Japanese Religions*, I.3 (Kyoto, 1959).

A similar standpoint is shown in the writings of Professors Heiler and Toynbee.¹ To illustrate – Professor Heiler, in lecturing at Tokyo² on ‘The History of Religions as a Way to the Unity of Religions’, began with the questions: ‘Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another?’ (Mal. 2.10). He felt that Lessing, the German philosopher, had been correct to speak of Christianity as having ‘existed before evangelists and apostles had written’, and went on to assert the possibility of finding seven areas of unity amongst religions. First among these would be the recognition of the reality of the transcendent – the holy, the divine, the other. He would suggest that the personal and rational elements in our Christian understanding of God do not exhaust the fully transcendent divine reality. They are, he would say, nothing more than ‘the foothills of a mountain range still higher’ (Rudolf Otto). To this consciousness of the transcendent Heiler would add the human apprehension of the transcendence at the level of man’s consciousness and the recognition, too, that it was the highest good and the goal of human aspiration. This reality, he says, is manifested as ultimate love – though, at this point, Heiler would tend to assimilate Buddhist compassion to Christian love. (In much of his thesis he seems to interpret the religious language of the other religions in terms of the Christian interpretation

¹ A. Toynbee, *An Historian's Approach to Religion*, London, OUP, 1956.

² The lecture was given at the Ninth International Congress for the History of Religions in 1958.

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of the language used.) Next, Heiler would place prayer and meditation, which constitute the bridge between the finite and the infinite. 'The Eternal God himself is present in the soul of man as its secret ground, spirit and spark.' The sixth element, he feels, is that all point out not only the way to God, but also the way to one's neighbour. 'Love is God's doing. It flows not from the small heart of man, but from the eternal love of God. But as love flows forth from the heart of God, so it flows back to him again; the neighbour to whom man renders love is God himself in human disclosure.' And last would come the assertion that love is the superior way to God.

Heiler's fundamental viewpoint would be, therefore, that the Christian should not go to conquer other religions, but that he seeks to unite with them at a higher level. Like Toynbee, he would accept the saying of Symmachus¹ to St Ambrose: 'The heart of so great a mystery can never be reached by following only one way.' Toynbee's comment is: 'We can take Symmachus' words to heart without being disloyal to Christianity. We cannot harden our hearts against Symmachus without hardening them against Christ. For what Symmachus is preaching is Christian charity.'²

The views of Heiler and Toynbee have been presented at some length because the Japanese, who have been long schooled in syncretistic fusion, find them parti-

¹ Symmachus was a pagan who pleaded for tolerance when the Christian Roman Government suppressed his ancestral religion.

² A. Toynbee, *An Historian's Approach to Religion*, p. 297.

cularly congenial. Christianity is so often felt to be intolerant and aggressive. But yet we must query whether this standpoint is true Christianity. Heiler's stress on the universality of God's working is certainly true to the New Testament, but there is another aspect that both he and Toynbee seem to disregard. They both want to escape from the particularism of Christianity, which says that God has spoken in Christ, that the ultimate is in him alone, and that there *was* an historic Incarnation. For the Christian history must have its centre in Christ. The Philosopher's Stone must also be 'a stone that will make men stumble' (I Peter 2.8), because he is *the* absolute, challenging any mere relativism. As Dr Kraemer puts it, 'All modes of revelation find their source, their meaning and their criterion in Jesus Christ.'¹ He is the *only* Truth, without whom no man comes to the Father.

In Christ there is both an affirmation and a denial of other religions. Christ *is* the light 'that enlightens every man' (John 1.9). He *is* the truth, and so, following Tolstoi's famous inversion ('Where love is, God is'), we may say, 'Where there is truth, there is Christ' and remind ourselves that 'God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him' (Acts 10.34-5). It is for this reason that we must affirm that there is real and vital confrontation with the living God in the Japanese

¹ H. Kraemer, *Religion and the Christian Faith*, p. 359. Kraemer comments fully on Toynbee's position in *World Cultures and World Religions* (Lutterworth Press, 1960).

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laboratory. There may be much of man – man's misconceptions and man's sinful idolatry as well as man's efforts to apprehend the totality of existence – but *still God works and has been working*. The Christian Church has been untrue to its Lord when it has treated other religions in a one-sided fashion as though they were merely human products. There is, it is true, much of man in them – but does not the Christian, too, turn his concepts into idols and seek to ungod God? Yet somehow God is active in them as well. There is an awareness of God or an ultimate; there is a dependence upon that which is outside man. Where logic and philosophy are forgotten, there are still the depths of a religious consciousness.

And yet there is the denial. *Men stumble at the stone*. Christ's 'Yes' must negate in us whatever seeks to quench his truth, and so is experienced as a 'No'. The denial, however, comes as much to any intolerant dogmatism on the part of a Christian as to the partial truths or falsity of the other faiths. The Philosopher's Stone, in the minds of the mediaeval alchemists, was the means of transmuting other elements into gold. Nothing which came into contact with it could ever remain the same. And so it is with Christ and the religions. They cannot stand *as they are* in the presence of Christ. There will be the affirmation of the truth they contain; but there will be also the denial. Kraemer reminds us that 'becoming a disciple of Christ means always a radical break with the past', because 'Christ is . . . the *crisis* of all Religion . . . as well the Judge as

the great Transformer'.¹ Because Christ is no mythical appearance, but an incarnate, real, historical personality – the Redeemer and Lord of mankind – coming to Christ must mean conversion and a break from other conceptions of God, of man, of life and of the world. It must mean a renewal and a new birth.

It is because of the denial that must come from such a faith in Christ that Christianity cannot help itself from the appearance of exclusiveness. The Christian must avoid the exclusiveness which comes from a forgetfulness that God is still Creator and Lord of his Creation, so that man's life, whether he be Christian or not, must ultimately depend on him; but, on the other hand, he cannot be loyal and faithful to Christ as the Truth without affirming that Jesus Christ has absolute demands upon all.² The Christian cannot, and should not, claim an intellectual or philosophical certainty; but he can propound the certainties of faith.

Let us consider, then, the affirmation and the denial, as applied to some of the aspects of Japanese Religions, that have been the subject of our study.

The place of nationhood

Shinto's emphasis on nationhood leads us back into an examination of our own Christian understanding of history. Christians speak glibly of God as the 'Lord of history', but have not yet asked the meaning of the

¹ *Religion and the Christian Faith*, p. 338.

² For an elaboration of this position, see Kraemer, *op. cit.*, pp. 373-4.

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history of the different nations. The significance of the particular as opposed to the general – the individual as opposed to the group – is also involved here. St Paul tussled with the problem of Israel's place as a nation; he felt that, despite the emergence of a New Israel in the Church, where racial distinctions no longer obtained, all through faith being incorporated into the New Israel, there was still a destiny for Israel as a nation. When we demand the indigenization of the Christian Church, are we not affirming the significance of the particular manifestation? Was not Uchimura at least partially right in opposing a vague internationalism which denied a Japanese version of Christianity? There is, of course, the danger of distortion. Just as Shinto, in its nationalistic form, was used as the ideological basis for expansionist warfare, so a nationalistic Christianity can forget the truth of inter-dependence within the Body of Christ. It is because the Church transcends the national that it can affirm the varied national manifestations within the churches. A Roman Catholic writes: 'The Church should be able to show herself in Asia and Africa not as a western institution governed by the laws and customs of the West, but as a Church of many rites and many languages, adapting herself to the needs of every culture and not imposing alien forms whether of language or ritual or architecture.'¹

The importance of the material

We have noticed that both Shinto and the New

¹ Bede Griffiths, O.S.B., 'The language of a mission', *Blackfriars*,

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Religions laid great emphasis on the material aspects of life, and reference has been made to their 'full-blooded affirmation of this world'. Here certainly is something which Christianity can, and should, approve. The Christian is concerned to say that God *is* Creator of all, and that everything he has created is good. The sacred and the secular are not to be divorced: in Christ the sacred has been brought near, and the material has been caught up into the sacred. Too often Christianity has been presented in Japan in the dress of puritanical prohibitions, giving to the other religionists the impression that the material is unimportant for the Christian. Man's daily life, man's food, man's health are all tied up with the Christian Gospel. But, alongside the affirmation there is the denial. For Japanese religions divine grace is too often exclusively tied up with the satisfaction of material or physical needs. To this attitude the word of Christ comes: 'Man does not live by bread alone.' To heed the word 'that proceeds from the mouth of God' will involve a new criterion for assessing the place of the material.

The validity of desire

The Japanese, as we have seen, are essentially naturalists. Their way is not the way of the ascetic, who can far too easily become obsessed with the self.

Jan.-Feb. 1960. He also quotes from the advice given in 1659 by the Congregation of Propaganda at Rome to the vicars apostolic of Asia: 'Do not wish and do not suggest to these people that they change their rites and customs. What is indeed more absurd than to bring France, Spain, or Italy, or any foreign country to China . . . ?'

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At this point there is tension for the Buddhist, because the Buddhist tradition would seem to reject desire altogether. Desire is the source of change and impermanence. You do not reach *Nirvana* by longing for it, nor *satori* by seeking to acquire it. Nevertheless, the ordinary Buddhist will accept the place of desire and the New Religions, together with Shinto, are concerned with the fulfilment of inner needs and longing. The Christian would here affirm that a true longing leads to fulfilment, for the longing which seeks for God is itself implanted by God. 'Thou hast made us for Thyself,' says St Augustine, 'and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee.' Simone Weil expresses this same truth:

Ulysses, who had been carried away during his sleep by strangers, woke in a strange land, longing for Ithaca with a longing that rent his soul. Suddenly Athena opened his eyes and he saw that he was in Ithaca. In the same way every man who longs indefatigably for his country, who is distracted from his desire neither by Calypso nor by the Sirens, will one day suddenly find that he is there.¹

Plumbing the depths of the self

The famous inscription at Delphi in Ancient Greece bore the words 'Know Thyself'. Buddhism, as we have seen, seeks to plumb the very depths of the human consciousness, feeling that therein lies the way to the Ultimate – to Buddha-hood. 'What is man?' asks the Psalmist. The very acts of thinking brings with it questions of 'being' and 'existence'.

¹ Simone Weil, *Waiting on God*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951, pp. 113–14.

Man is asked a question by the very fact of his existence, and . . . this is a question raised by the contradiction within himself – that of being in nature and at the same time of transcending nature by the fact that he is life aware of itself. . . . We try to evade the question by concern with property, prestige, power, production, fun, and ultimately, by trying to forget that we – that I – exist. No matter how often he *thinks* of God or goes to church or how much he believes in religious ideas, if he, the whole man, is deaf to the question of existence, if he does not have an answer to it . . . he lives and dies like one of the million things he produces.¹

Dr Fromm is here suggesting that only when a man begins to understand himself can he begin to live in the true sense. He feels that Zen Buddhism, in particular, is concerned with a fundamental question, and the Christian, too, would agree that an understanding of man is crucial to an understanding of any ultimate. In dialogue with the Buddhist, however, he would desire to continue the quotation from the Psalmist: 'What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him?' (Ps. 8.4). Man can only be understood in relation to his Creator; here comes the denial to the attempt to plumb the depths of the self and understand the world through man *alone*. The knowledge of man can only come through the Philosopher's Stone, for Christ, the 'express image' (Heb. 1.3) shows bodily in his person the meaning of the 'image of

¹ E. Fromm, 'Psycho-analysis and Zen Buddhism', *Zen Buddhism and Psycho-analysis*, ed. Fromm, London, Allen and Unwin, 1960 (p. 92).

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God' in man. Man is only to be known truly in terms of relatedness to him who made him – '*What is man, that thou are mindful of him?*'

The Importance of Nothing

It will be remembered that St Paul, writing to the church at Corinth, referred to the fact that the Christians there, though apparent nothings, could bring to nothing the seeming 'somethings' (cf. I Cor. 1.18–31). What he says illuminates what Buddhists sometimes say about 'nothing' and, in turn, what they say can give us new insights into the depths of our Christian faith.

The Buddhist rejection of the Christian's God is not always a rejection of God, but of what they believe to be an idol. The Christian's presentation of God often seems to be a conceptual idol – not something of wood or stone, but still an idol, because the creation of man. It is for this reason that the Buddhist speaks of 'nothing' – but he does not mean by it a 'nothingness' which is mere emptiness or 'non-being'. 'Nothing' for the Buddhist has a positive value, for out of 'nothing' true being can be born.

The Christian here can find something which illuminates his understanding of Creation and Recreation. God, we say, 'created out of nothing' – because God, we affirm, is eternally self-sufficient and needed nothing beside himself for his self-fulfilment. Following Archbishop Temple, we may say:

$$\begin{array}{rcl} \text{The World} - \text{God} & = & 0 \\ \text{God} - \text{World} & = & \text{God}. \end{array}$$

To speak of 'Creation out of nothing' is to affirm God's Godhead and also to say that everything depends upon him. And St Paul and St John, too, think of the working of God's grace in the same way. The Being of God confronts the non-being and the self-destructive contradictions of our lives, and the miracle of a new being is wrought before our eyes. It is for this reason that the apparent 'nothings' can challenge the apparent 'beings' – because out of the nothingness there has been a new 'creation out of nothing' in and through Christ. When the Buddhist, however, claims that enlightenment comes to birth out of the 'nothingness' apart from any external agent, the Christian must disagree.

Community and the individual

The closely-knit character of Japanese society – with the emphasis upon reciprocal responsibilities and obligations – also contains a kernel of the truth which must be affirmed. The Christian, too, believes in the solidarity of mankind and the inter-relationship of all members of the Church. St Paul gives us the metaphor of the body, in which there is a differentiation of function as well as an over-all unity. Where there is so much individualism and sectarianism within the churches, the stress on solidarity in the non-Christian society outside the churches comes as a salutary reminder that there is need for the expression outwardly of the inner oneness in which Christians profess to believe.

All that has been said about corporate relationships, about the family, about the clan and about the other

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social groupings, has indicated an almost unconscious acceptance of the premise that man is created to be in community, and that an isolated or over-individualistic existence does not fulfil man's destiny. This must certainly be accepted and affirmed, but, once again, there seems to be a mingling of a denial with the affirmation. For the Christian, family relationships are dependent upon the pattern of the divine Fatherhood, and reciprocal relationships at the human level are dependent upon the prior relationship between God and man. We might say that the vertical plane is prior to the horizontal. Obligation to man can only be put into its proper context where obligation to God is recognized as having the prior claim. As Professor Heiler pointed out, love to neighbour must be a reflection of love to God.

Again, there can be a hierarchy amongst men in terms of function within society, but divinity is not simply a stage at the top of the ascending scale. God is the basis of any hierarchy, and not its apex. And the Lordship of God means that the hierarchy is temporary and functional and not an ultimate, whilst his Fatherhood means that community is only a reality because of his love, which calls forth our love in response.

The search for comprehensiveness

On more than one occasion we have had cause to observe that Japanese religions have a fundamentally pantheistic twist. The absolute must be in everything. There is the strong conviction that everything must

share in a basic spirituality; there can be no distinction. On grounds of pure logic, this view of life should rule out the possibility of prayer, because it would mean that there is no distinction between the one who prays and the one to whom the prayer is addressed. And yet the Japanese still prays – though some would say that the meditation in Buddhism is not prayer in a Christian sense, being an entry into the self rather than communion with another. For Shinto, as we have seen, the Kami are to be found everywhere. There is a power beyond, pervading all things, and not basically different from the stuff of humanity, for the human, too, is a Kami or, at any rate, will become a Kami. For Buddhism there is the common Buddha nature, in which all things participate.

Now the Christian is afraid of falling into 'pantheistic heresy'; he wishes to preserve the distinction between God as the Creator and the Source of all, and what God has brought into being. As a result, there is a tendency to put on one side the very strong emphasis in fundamental Christianity upon the immanence of God (his continued presence and working within the world) and to lay stress only upon the transcendence. In consequence, God seems somewhat remote, and Christianity appears to lack the almost carnal intimacy with the Kami, that Shinto has, and the sense of oneness with the totality of Being, which Buddhism has. Perhaps Christianity's weakness at this point is due to the fact that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit has been insufficiently emphasized. For it is through the Spirit that the transcendent and

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the immanent are brought together in actual experience. Professor Coulson, in speaking of the relation of science and religion, has said that, if God is simply represented as the 'God of the gaps' – a God who is simply responsible for what science at the moment cannot yet explain – he is not God at all. Either he is in the whole of science, or he is nowhere at all.¹ Similarly, Archbishop Temple once said with respect to revelation that, if everything was not a medium of divine revelation, nothing was. We must surely assert that God's relationship with creation as its Creator is a vital and continuing one, and that through him all being can come to a complete unity. We must be ready to affirm the search for wholeness and comprehensiveness on the part of the Japanese religions, believing as we do, that Christ is the fullness 'who fills all in all' (Eph. 1.23), and that there is the possibility of comprehending the completed pattern at the point when finally we 'shall understand fully, even as [we] have been fully understood' (I Cor. 13.12). Just as it is a matter of faith with the Buddhist that there is the possibility of comprehensiveness, so the Christian walks in faith, believing that the broken pieces which he sees about him will fall into place.

But the Christian denial must come to the somewhat impersonal way in which Buddhism, in particular, thinks of 'being'. There is nothing of the Holy Spirit in Buddhist thought. The Buddhist will sometimes assert that he has the Father in the Ultimate Dharma (whether

¹ C. A. Coulson, *Science and Christian Belief*, Fontana Books, 1958, p. 44.

personalized as Amida or Kannon or some other *Bosatsu*); the symbol of the Son is in the Buddha, Incarnate in this world for the mission of compassion; but he will confess that he has no Holy Spirit. It is for this reason that a truly personal relationship with God becomes unthinkable, because 'When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God' (Rom. 8.15-16). It is the same Spirit who makes us contemporaries with Christ, and makes his word and work make sense to our own consciousness. It is the same Spirit who makes prayer articulate:

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God (Rom. 8.26-7).

What is more, in both of these passages the immanence (God with us) has been coupled with the transcendence (God above us). At this point, too, the Philosopher's Stone comes as the 'stone of stumbling' to Japanese religion, for there is no real transcendence in Japanese ideas of divinity, even though the Japanese soul vaguely feels after the grace which can only come from a God who is 'high and lifted up' (Isa. 6.1).

It has been suggested that the Japanese almost subconsciously feel the lack of three things: 'a full dedication to God, the purifying experience of repentance, and the grace of the transcendent God from which true life

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flows'.¹ Perhaps for this reason the New Religions have striven to say something of repentance and grace; perhaps for this reason Japanese Buddhism gave so much emphasis to faith and almost gave personality and divinity to what had been primarily a philosophical concept. But there is still no demand for a real conversion of life; there is no renewal of an impotent will. The natural man is instead confirmed and re-assured and freed from his psychological tensions and immediate fears; he is not made to face the judgement of divine holiness. The same Holy Spirit, through whom God is experienced as present Reality, and through whom the identification of the Church with her Lord becomes possible, is also the Spirit who 'convinces' of sin and righteousness and judgement (John 16.8). Having no doctrine of the Spirit, the Japanese have little consciousness of sin, as the Christian understands sin (i.e., not mere acts of a sinful character, but a matter of broken relationships with God and man). The Japanese will speak rather of the 'dust' which clings to a man in his daily life, and which simply needs to be swept away. And because there is a lack of a deep consciousness of sin in terms of personal defeat and self-centred opposition to God, there is no meeting with the grace which can alone save and reconstitute sinful man. The zeal of the Nichiren Buddhist or the adherent of the New Religion can become part of a full dedication of the self to God, as there is the consciousness that only from God can flow the empowering for a life of fruitful service.

¹ T. Jaeckel, *Japanese Religions*, II.1, p. 12.

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And in the midst is the Christian Church, itself reminded by the variegated pattern of religious experiment that the Christ she calls her Lord is the Lord of variegated riches. The message of solidarity in Shinto, of comprehensiveness, detachment, mystery, zeal and quietude in Buddhism, of passionate prophetism and a striving for relevance in the New Religions, of criticism and judgement in modern agnosticism and Marxist philosophy, is in very truth a word spoken by the Spirit to the Church. As the Church receives the message, and learns that only a Church with mighty works and signs is a truly relevant Church – only a Church which reveals the power of God Almighty can be both the recipient of grace and the medium of its bestowal – so she will be enabled to encounter the religions. There will be the dialogue with them, and out of it will come not only understanding, but life.

Appendix I

Statistics of Religions in Japan

The exact statistician will despair of ever acquiring accurate figures for the numerical strength of the different religions in Japan. Shinto figures very often incorporate all the people in a particular neighbourhood who have some contact with the local shrine, whilst the Buddhist Temples reckon according to the number of family tablets accredited to them, multiplying by four to five, in order to assess membership. The Japanese Ministry of Education, in its *Survey of Religions as at December 31, 1957*, quotes an affiliation (of all religious groups) of 123,115,901 – more than thirty million more than the total population! There is, of course, a considerable overlap of membership, with many adherents of the New Religions being reckoned Buddhist according to their family links. It is likely that the most accurate statistics are those given for the Christian groups and some of the New Religions. The following figures come largely from the Ministry of Education Survey for 1959, but the figures for Christianity come from the 1960 Japanese Christian Year Book. It should be noted that the Ministry of Education survey classifies many of the New Religions as Shinto or Buddhist Sects according to the theological or ceremonial background of the newer cult.

142 Shinto Sects (including 43 New Religions) are listed, and their membership is put at 79,221,216 (the precision of the figure being due to the fact that the statistics of some of the newer religions which keep more careful records are added to vaguer totals). 169 Buddhist Sects are listed – with a total membership of 39,720,884. 30 other Religions are quoted, 13 of which are said to be syncretistic with a Shinto hue, 2 syncretistic with a Buddhist flavour, 2 with a tendency towards Christianity, whilst 2 are said to be syncretistic without any strong preference, 6 to be original religions, and a further 5, defying classification, specialize in divination and necromancy. 3,397,599 are said to be members of these 30 religions.

The Christians, numbering (in June 1959) 678,258, belong to 38 denominations in the main, although there are additional splinter groups, which regular statistical surveys cannot take into account. The Roman Catholics, numbering 266,608, are the largest group – with the United Church (a union of eight Protestant denominations) listing 180,458 members. Next in size are the Anglicans (with 41,084 members) and the Orthodox Church, claiming 35,293 adherents. The total for all the Protestant Churches is 376,357 – with 4,668 churches and other places of worship, and 6,541 workers. The Roman Catholic Church, which has more than doubled its membership in the post-war period, has only 873 churches for its membership of 266,608, but its workers, totalling 6,202, are more than fifty per cent foreign, pointing to a far greater indigenization on the part of

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the Protestant bodies. The numbers attached to the Mu-kyōkai Movement have been estimated as between 50,000 and 100,000, which would bring the total of professing Christians close to three-quarters of a million. One Japanese Government survey, however, estimated that three per cent of the population was Christian, which would mean a total of two and three-quarter millions. A recent writer has suggested that this estimate 'may indicate that there are many people who, even though not actively related to an organized expression of Christianity, nevertheless place themselves within the area of the Christian faith or at least a preference for Christianity instead of other faiths' (B. L. Hinchman in the *Japan Christian Quarterly*, January 1960, p. 26). Few would give credence to such an estimate however, and Mr Hinchman adds that, if it were true, 'the Church in Japan would indeed be the "Church Invisible!"'.

Appendix II

Religion-State Relations

An excellent survey of religion-state relationships from the time of the Meiji Restoration to the present day is made by W. P. Woodard in *Contemporary Japan*, volumes XXIV, XXV and XXVI. The following documents are particularly significant.

1. *Religion under the 1889 Constitution*

Article 20 guaranteed freedom to religious bodies, which meant that there was no regulation or supervision.

Article 28 read: 'Japanese subjects shall, *within limits not prejudicial to peace and order, and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects*, enjoy freedom of belief.' This condition was subsequently used to exercise considerable control over religious bodies.

2. *The Imperial Rescript on Education* (1890)

The emphasis upon loyalty and filial piety should be particularly noted.

'Know ye our subjects: Our Imperial Ancestors have founded our Empire on a basis broad and everlasting and have deeply and firmly implanted virtue. Our subjects ever united in loyalty and filial piety have from generation to generation illustrated the beauty thereof. This is the glory of the fundamental character of our

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Empire, and herein also lies the source of our education. Ye, our subjects, be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brothers and sisters; as husbands and wives be harmonious, as friends true; bear yourself in modesty and moderation; extend benevolence to all, pursue learning and cultivate arts: thoroughly develop intellectual faculties and perfect moral powers; furthermore, advance public good and promote common interests; always respect the constitution and observe the laws; should emergency arise, offer yourself courageously to the State and thus guard and maintain the property of our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth. So shall ye not only be our good and faithful subjects, but render illustrious the best traditions of your forefathers. . . . The way herein set forth is indeed the teaching bequeathed by our Imperial Ancestors to be observed alike by their descendants and their subjects, infallible in all ages and true in all places.'

Professor Kan has written of the effect of this Imperial Rescript vis-à-vis the preaching of Christianity. 'Up to the end of the last war it was not allowed to preach Christianity if it contradicted the Imperial Rescript. Therefore care had to be taken not to contradict the teaching of the Imperial Rescript when Christianity was preached. Naturally preachers and pastors tried to explain Christianity by using traditional Japanese thoughts and words. Such a procedure will easily result in depriving a term of its specific biblical content. . . . And if such a procedure goes on without precautions, the specific content of Christian thought is gradually

overlooked and finally entirely forgotten' (W. E. Kan, 'Christian communication in a non-Christian culture', *Japanese Religions*, I.2, 1959, pp. 8-9).

A non-Christian drew upon the words of the Rescript to attack Christianity. 'Christianity advocates universalism and a love that knows no distinctions, and consequently it cannot be harmonized with the purport of the Imperial Rescript on Education which is nationalistic. Moreover, Christianity places its Heavenly Father and its Christ above the Emperor and therein it contradicts the principles of loyalty and filial piety of the Imperial Rescript on Education' (quoted in D. C. Holton, *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism*, Chicago, 1947). Cf. 'The doctrines of Christianity are quite irreconcilable with the Imperial Rescript on Education' (H. Kato, *Waga Kokutai to Kirisutokyo*, Tokyo, 1907).

3. *The interpretation of the 1889 Constitution, given by Prince Hirobumi Ito*

'Belief and conviction are operations of the mind. As to forms of worship, to religious discourses, to the mode of propagating a religion and to the formation of religious associations and meetings, some general and legal or police restrictions must be observed for the maintenance of public peace and order. No believer in this or that religion has the right to place himself outside the pale of the law of the Empire on the ground of his serving his god and to free himself from his duties to the State, which, as a subject, he is bound to discharge. . . .'

Appendix II

4. *The Disestablishment of State Shinto* (15th December 1945)

'The sponsorship, support, perpetuation, control, and dissemination of Shinto by Japanese national, prefectural, or local governments, or by public official, subordinates and employees, acting in their official capacity, are prohibited and will cease immediately. All financial support from public funds and all official affiliations with Shinto and Shinto shrines are prohibited and will cease immediately.'

5. *The Imperial Rescript renouncing claims to divinity* (1st January 1946)

'The ties between Us and Our people have always stood upon mutual trust and affection. They do not depend upon mere legends and myths. They are not predicted upon the false conception that the Emperor is divine and that the Japanese people are superior to other races and are fated to rule the world.'

From what has been said about the traditional Shintoistic approach to divinity, it is easy to understand why this pronouncement of the Emperor received greater prominence in the West than in Japan itself. Westerners tended to interpret the Japanese understanding of the divinity of the Emperor in terms of western (primarily Christian) theistic thought. For the Japanese, however, the distinction between natural and supernatural is not so clearly drawn. Everything possesses some measure of spirituality, and so partakes of the Kami-nature. Hence the Emperor's divinity was not

thought of in a qualitative manner; he differed from his people in the degree of his Kami-nature and not in essence. As he was thought to be the chief high priest of the head of the hierarchy of Kami, the Kami-nature attached to him more than to others. Cf. 'The Emperor as a god in the Japanese sense is a symbol rather than an actual deity. An insane Emperor is as much a national god as a heroic Emperor' (Kazuo Kawai, *Japan's American Interlude*, p. 74). For the Japanese the post-war change was, accordingly, not so drastic – 'To the Japanese it was as easy to demote a god to a man as to elevate a man to a god; it required no real change, only a slight shift of focus' (ibid., p. 79).

The new Constitution of 1946-47 in Article 1 states the position of the Emperor: 'The Emperor shall be the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people, deriving his position from the sovereign will of the people.' Few Japanese, however, understand the precise authority of a constitutional monarchy, and, as a result, prayers for the Emperor tend not to be used in Christian churches on the ground that he cannot be said to be included amongst 'those with authority'.

(D. C. Holtom, *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism*, gives most of the relevant documents for an understanding of the change in the status of Shinto after the war.)

6. *Japan's New Constitution* (promulgated 3rd November 1946; effective from 3rd May 1947)

Article 20: 'Freedom of religion is guaranteed to all.

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No person shall be compelled to take part in any religious act, celebration, rite or practice. No religious organization shall receive any privileges from the State, nor exercise any political authority. The State and its organs shall refrain from religious education and other religious activity.'

Article 89: 'No public money or other property shall be expended for the use, benefit, or maintenance of any religious institution or association, or for any charitable, educational or benevolent enterprise not under the control of public authority.'

(Woodard comments on this article: 'Apparently the drafters were even willing to secularize the State completely rather than run any risk of a revival of Shinto as a national cult.' *Contemporary Japan*, XXIV (1956), p. 651.)

Table of Dates

- 552 Buddhism was officially introduced into Japan.
- 584 First Buddhist Temples built.
- 604 Shōtoku Taishi enacted his new Constitution.
- 607 Hōryūji Temple built.
- 698 A Shrine-Temple constructed at Ise; beginnings of active Shinto-Buddhist syncretism.
- 710 Capital established at Nara; beginning of Nara Period.
- 712 *Kojiki* published.
- 720 *Nihon-Shoki* published.
- 745 Gyōgi, the unorthodox Buddhist, promoted to position of Buddhist 'Archbishop' to forward popularization of Buddhism.
- 752 Construction of the Daibutsu at the Todaiji Temple in Nara.
- 798 Capital moves to Kyoto; beginning of the Heian Period.
- 805 Saichō returns from China and founds Tendai Sect.
- 806 Kūkai returns from China and establishes Shingon Buddhism.
- 927 *Engishiki* (the collection of *Norito*) published.
- 1117 Ryōnin preached *Yuzu-nembutsu*.
- 1156 Beginning of the Kamakura Age; the old aristocracy replaced by the new warrior class.
- 1175 Hōnen founds Jōdo-Shu.
- 1191 Eisai returns from China and introduces the Rinza School of Zen Buddhism.

Table of Dates

- 1224 Shinran establishes Jōdo Shinshu.
- 1227 Dōgen comes back from China, and founds the Soto School of Zen Buddhism.
- 1253 Nichiren founds Nichiren Buddhism.
- 1276 Ippen preaches *Odori-nembutsu* (the Amida faith put to dancing).
- 1318 Literature published in defence of Ryobu Shinto; in those days the *Honji suijaku* theory was systematized. Sanno Shinto (the combination of Shinto with Tendai teaching) dates from this period.
- 1320 Watarai establishes Ise Shinto – a purist reaction against syncretistic forms.
- 1487 The revolt of Nembutsu believers occurs; several other revolts occurred subsequently. The peasant groups were largely adherents of Pure Land Sects.
- 1549 Arrival of St Francis Xavier at Kagoshima.
- 1569 Nobunaga, as part of anti-Buddhist moves, permits preaching of Christianity in the capital.
- 1571 Nobunaga destroys the Tendai stronghold on Mount Hiei.
- 1581 First Christian seminary established.
- 1587 Hideyoshi issues the order for the exile of Christian missionaries.
- 1596 The twenty-six martyrs of Nagasaki.
- 1598 Persecution of Christians temporarily subsides with death of Hideyoshi.
- 1600 Beginning of the Tokugawa Shogunate.
- 1612 Ieyasu Tokugawa prohibits Christian propaganda.
- 1614 Christian missionaries and more than 400 Japanese Christians exiled.
- 1615 Regulations enacted for all Buddhist sects.
- 1627 Intensification of search for Christian believers.
- 1637 Revolt of Christians in Shimabara and Amakusa.

Japan's Religious Ferment

- 1638 The act of national isolation issued.
- 1771 Norinaga Moto-ori writes on Shinto beginnings. From that time the Shinto Revival Movement gains in strength. Stress on national classics.
- 1814 Munetada Kurozumi founds Kurozumikyō.
- 1838 Miki Nakayama founds Tenrikyō.
- 1853 Commodore Perry (of U.S.A.) demands opening of country.
- 1858 Freedom of religion for foreigners in Japan authorized by treaty.
- 1859 First non-Roman missionaries come to Japan. Bunjiro Kawate founds Konkōkyō.
- 1861 Bishop Nicolai of the Orthodox Church comes to Japan.
- 1863 Roman Catholic missionaries re-enter.
- 1868 The overthrow of the Shogunate and return of Imperial rule. Beginning of the Meiji Period. Buddhism separated from Shinto; shrines purified of Buddhist traits.
- 1872 First Protestant Church established – in Yokohama.
- 1873 Notice boards prohibiting the propagation of Christianity removed.
- 1875 Rites of Shrine Shinto regulated.
- 1884 Attempt to establish a government-directed syncretism of Buddhism and Shinto – with Shinto dominant – given up.
- 1889 The new western-style Constitution promulgated, giving guarantees for Religious Freedom.
- 1890 The Imperial Rescript on Education.
- 1900 Shrine Shinto separated from Bureau of Religions.
- 1912 Death of the Emperor Meiji; end of the Meiji Period.
- 1913 Transfer of the Bureau of Religions to the Ministry of Education.
- 1920 Establishment of the Meiji Shrine.

Table of Dates

- 1940 Regimentation of Religious Bodies under the Religious Organizations Law.
- 1945 Shinto removed from government patronage and control by the Occupation.
- 1947 Freedom of religion guaranteed under the new Constitution.
- 1951 Religious Juridical Personal Law, which determines what constitutes a Religious Body, promulgated.
- 1959 Centenary of Protestant Missionary activity celebrated.

Word-List

SHINTO

Amaterasu-Ō-mikami The ancestral Kami of the Imperial House; according to the mythology, the offspring of Izanagi-no-mikoto; identified with the Sun goddess; her shrine is at Ise.

Hachiman A very popular Shinto Kami, said to be the Emperor Ojin; often identified as the War Kami.

Harai The purification ceremony.

Ise Jingu The grand shrine at Ise, the largest and most sacred of the Shinto shrines. According to legend, it was founded in A.D. 5 – but it probably dates from the fifth century. The sacred mirror, symbol of the Kami Amaterasu-Ō-mikami, and one of the three treasures (the others being the sword and the jewel) is kept there.

Izanagi In the traditional mythology, he is in the seventh generation of deities in the age of the Kami. With his wife *Izanami*, he was responsible for the creation of the Japanese islands and for the birth of many of the important Kami. The two are likely to be primitive Kami, and the prior generations added to give them also a genealogy; they are also the symbols of the male and the female. *Izanami*, on giving birth to the Fire-Kami, died and descended to the underworld. *Izanagi* sought to contact her there, and incurred pollution, whereupon he instituted the practice of *harai*, a purification from ritual impurity.

Jingu; Jinja Both words refer to the Shinto shrine. Other names used are *miya* and *yashiro*. The shrines vary in size and appearance, but have several features in common.

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They are almost all located in pure natural surroundings of great beauty and contain the *Honden*, or Main Shrine, as well as the *Haiden*, Hall of Worship, the *Norito-den*, or Hall for reciting the *norito* (ritual prayers), *Heiden*, Hall of Offering, and the *Kagura-den*, or Stage for the Ceremonial Dance. *Jinja Shintō* (Shrine Shinto) has been contrasted since the end of the last century with *Shuha Shintō* (Sect Shinto).

Kami The word used to express the object of worship in Shinto. The word is used to express what arouses awe or a sense of the numinous. In Shinto the Kami are infinitely numerous, and this is expressed in the term *yao-yorozu no kami* (eight million Kami).

Kamidana The household altar, connected with Shinto worship. The word literally means 'Kami-shelf'.

Kasuga Refers to the Kami enshrined at Nara; was originally the *uji-gami* of the Nakatomi or Fujiwara family, but later become a popular Kami.

Kojiki A Japanese classic, compiled in A.D. 712, based upon oral traditions; incorporates mythology and various historical traditions.

Kokka Shinto State Shinto, as practised until 1945. It is said to be non-religious, but presupposed much of Shinto mythology. It stressed *saisei itchi*, the unity of religious rites and politics. This form of Shinto was known in the west as 'Emperor Worship'.

Makoto Generally used to mean honesty, truthfulness or sincerity; is the fundamental virtue in Shinto.

Matsuri The common name for a festival, and is the most important even in Shinto worship.

Nihon Shoki A Japanese classic, written in Chinese, and compiled in A.D. 720; the early part deals with the 'age of the Kami'. With the *Kojiki*, it is the basic text of Shinto mythology.

Norito The ritual words addressed to a Kami; belong to the

time when it was believed that the very words had a magical power.

Ryobu Shinto The syncretic form of Shinto, in which Shinto Kami were identified with Buddhist Bodhisattvas. The fusion of Shinto and Buddhism is also referred to as *Shinbutsu*.

Shintai The object of worship in a shrine, where the spirit of the Kami is supposed to reside.

Shintō A word coined at the time of the Buddhist invasion of Japan to express the old faith; means 'the way of the Kami'.

BUDDHISM

Amitabha (Japanese: Amida) The Buddha of Infinite Light; the Lord of the Pure Land; the object of worship and devotion of the Pure Land (*Jōdo*) sects.

Arhat The saint of Hina-yana Buddhism, who has realized the goal of his search, having traversed the Eightfold Path.

Bodhisattva (Japanese: Bosatsu) In southern Buddhism he is the aspirant for Buddha-hood, but, in Maha-yana Buddhism, he is the counterpart of the *Arhat*; is not concerned with his own salvation, but shows compassion to others.

Busshin Designates the Ultimate Buddha reality.

Butsudan The household Buddhist altar.

Dharma (Japanese: Hō) The principle of law; identified in Maha-yana Buddhism with *tathata* as the symbol of ultimate reality.

Dharmakaya (Japanese: Hosshin) The Body of the Law – the Buddha as the truth personified in its ultimate state, as opposed to the *Nirmanakaya*, the accommodated form in the historical Buddha, or the *Sambhogakaya*, the bliss body, the Buddha in the midst of adoring Bodhisattvas.

Hina-yana The name used by the Maha-yanists to distinguish

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their own school from the southern tradition, which they felt to be the 'small or lesser vehicle' of salvation. The only surviving form of Hina-yana teaching is the *Theravada* school, as seen in Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, and Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

Hokekyō The *Lotus Sutra*, *Saddharma-pundarika Sutra*; especially revered by the *Tendai* and *Nichiren* sects.

Hōnen Founder of the *Jōdo-Shu* (Pure Land Sect). See H. H. Coates and R. Ishizuka, *Hōnen the Buddhist Saint*, Kyoto, 1925.

Hotoke The Buddha; sometimes used for the historic *Gautama Sakyamuni*, but more often for the goal of all – to become a Buddha.

Hōzō The legendary monk who made the forty-eight vows and finally became *Amida*.

Jiriki Self-power – the path to salvation (enlightenment) through one's own power, as opposed to *tariki*, salvation through the power of another, who is *Amida* in the Pure Land Sects.

Jōdo The Pure Land – the Paradise in the west, where *Amida* dwells in his Bliss Body.

Jōdo-Shinshu The True Pure Land Sect, founded by *Shinran*.

Jōdo-Shu The sect that came into being as a result of Hōnen's preaching.

Karma (Japanese: *Innen*) The law of interacting cause and effect; in Hina-yana is linked with *samsara* (birth and death); in ethics, is the Law of Ethical Causation, determining character and destiny.

Karuna (Japanese: *Jihi*) Compassion – one of the two pillars of Maha-yana Buddhism.

Kegon Sect A highly intellectualized form of Maha-yana Buddhism, introduced into Japan in 736; its headquarters is Todaiji at Nara, the largest wooden building in the world. Its teaching centres in the *Avatamsaka Sutra*,

which holds the complete inter-diffusion of the Absolute and the particular.

Kōan A problem used during meditation in Zen monasteries of the Rizai tradition as a means towards attaining *satori*.

Kūkai (or **Kōbō Daishi**) The founder of the Shingon Sect and an important character in Japanese religious history; founded monastery on Mount Koya.

Kwannon (or **Kannon**) Next to *Dainichi* and *Amida*, the most revered of the Bodhisattvas; supposed to be the spiritual son of Amida; represented in China and Japan as female, and commonly described as 'the goddess of mercy'.

Lochana One of the great Bodhisattvas, sometimes confused with *Vairochana* (*Dainichi*). The *Daibutsu* (great Buddha) of Todaiji at Nara is of this Buddha.

Lotus Sutra See *Hokekyō*.

Maha-yana The great vehicle of northern Buddhism (i.e. Buddhism in Tibet, Mongolia, China and Japan); embraces the Sanskrit and Chinese canon of sutras.

Maitreya (Japanese: **Miroku**) The coming Buddha; commonly regarded as the king of enlightenment and mercy.

Mandala A symbolic picture of almost magical power, used in esoteric Buddhism (especially in *Shingon*). The Nichiren Mandala is an object of worship, containing the names of all who partake of *tathata* (i.e. ultimate Buddha-hood).

Namu myōhō renge kyō 'Honour to the glorious Lotus Sutra' – the invocation introduced by Nichiren in his exclusive dependence on that sutra.

Nembutsu 'Ponder on the Buddha' – a name given to the invocation '*Namu Amida Butsu*', which, in Jōdo-shu, is the means of entering the Pure Land of Amida, and which, in Jōdo Shinshu, is a symbol of thankfulness to Amida. Esoterically, it is used as a means to attain mystical unity with Amida. The invocation means 'Honour to the Buddha of infinite Light'.

Nichiren The name taken over by the founder of Nichiren

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Buddhism. 'Nichi' = the sun; 'ren' = lotus; the name referring to his birth at Awa, whence Amaterasu-Ōmikami (the Sun) came, and to his absolute devotion to the Lotus Sutra.

Nirmanakaya (Japanese: **Ōjin**) The body of accommodation, whereby the Buddha can take on an historical or phenomenal form; one of Buddhism's trinity of modes.

Nirvana The supreme goal of endeavour – the point at which all the possibilities within the Buddha nature are fully realized and actualized.

Prajna (Japanese: **Chie**) Transcendental wisdom, which is gained in enlightenment; one of the pillars of Maha-yana Buddhism.

Rinzai One of the main schools of Zen Buddhism; introduced by Eisai. The Zen popularized in the writings of Professor D. T. Suzuki is of this school.

Saichō (or **Dengyō Daishi**) The founder of the Japanese Tendai School.

Sakyamuni (Japanese: **Shaka**) The historical Buddha of India. The idealization within Maha-yana Buddhism tends to put aside the historical and stress Sakyamuni's significance as the *nirmanakaya*.

Sambhogakaya (Japanese: **Hōshin**) The Bliss Body or Reward Body, one of the Three Bodies of Buddhism. See *Dharmakaya* and *Nirmanakaya*.

Satori The enlightenment experience, which is central to Buddhist soteriology.

Shin An abbreviated form of *Jōdo Shinshu*.

Shingon True Word Sect, an esoteric form of Buddhism, introduced by *Kūkai*. Its doctrine is a pantheistic mysticism. The entire universe expresses the Ultimate, and the goal of the life of the universe is the full fruition of *Busshin* in man. *Vairochana* is the expression of this ultimate reality. Shingon makes extensive use of magic and symbolism in picture and action.

Japan's Religious Ferment

- Shinran** The founder of *Jōdo Shinshu*; took Hōnen's teaching to its logical conclusion.
- Shōtoku Taishi** Regarded as the founder and establisher of Buddhism in Japan; acted as regent from 593 until his death in 621; erected the temple of Horyuji, Japan's oldest surviving temple.
- Sōtō** The name of the other prominent school of Zen, introduced into Japan by Dōgen (1200–53).
- Tathagata** (Japanese: *Nyōrai*) The term used of the Buddhas – those who have either entered or come from *Tathata*, the ultimate and unconditioned basis of life (essence as opposed to existence).
- Tathata** (Japanese: *Shinnyō*) 'Suchness' or 'thusness' – a word that seeks to describe an ultimate state of complete undifferentiation. It is the point beyond definition, where neither affirmations nor negations can be applied.
- Tendai** The Japanese sect, founded by Saichō, which was based on the teachings of the Chinese T'ient'ai School. Its outstanding characteristic is its comprehensiveness. It seeks to harmonize and to recognize the doctrines of all the sects as part of the one Dharma. The three thousand aspects of being all make a single unity.
- Zen** Means 'meditation' – the Japanese equivalent of the Chinese *Ch'an*, itself derived from the Sanskrit *Dhyana*. *Zazen* ('sitting at meditation') is a distinctive feature of Zen practice, being a means to the attainment of *satori*.

NEW RELIGIONS

(Only those alluded to in the book are mentioned here.)

- Ananai-kyō** 'To tie God with man'; a highly syncretic religion, based mainly on Shinto and Christianity. Its founder, Yonosuke Nakano, is still alive, and stresses both '*kamigakari*' ('God-possession') and '*chinkon*' ('tranquillizing of the soul') through which union with the 'Great spirit of the universe' becomes possible. It awaits the

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coming of a saviour, and believes in the mystical power of the heavens – hence the building of a large number of observatories throughout Japan. Believers number almost 100,000.

Ittōen 'The garden of the One Light'; a syncretic attempt to express that human life can only achieve its true purpose in acknowledgement of the one, true light. The community, which lives simply and humbly, professes not to be a 'religion' – as there are adherents of many faiths there, including Christians – but the form of their common worship is composite. They are inspired by the example of the founder, Tenkō Nishida, who has led a life of selfless service for more than fifty-five years.

Konkōkyō 'The religion of golden light'; founded in 1859 by Konkō Daijin. It stresses that man, as a child of God, should live in dependence on Tenchi-kane-no-Kami ('the God of the brightness of the heaven and the earth'); only thus can he avoid the anguish which comes from *karma*. The religion has universalist traits, and is regarded by some – perhaps questionably – to be a genuine monotheistic faith. There are about 625,000 worshippers.

Kurozumikyō 'The religion of Kurozumi' – named after its founder (1780–1850), who had a special 'calling' in 1814. Even before that he had a great reputation for piety. He emphasized the worship of Amaterasu-Ō-mikami, and almost thought of the sun as having a sentient personality, the source of the parent-spirit which pervades the whole universe. Like Konkōkyō, it was reckoned as one of the Shinto Sects, and present-day worshippers number about 750,000.

Ōmoto 'The Great Foundation'; founded by Mrs Deguchi in 1892, but was suppressed in 1937 – to be refounded in 1946. It is highly syncretistic, and incorporates spiritist elements. God is the all-pervading Spirit and demands that man works for unity and universal brotherhood, for

limitless potentialities are released as man is united with God and man. There are about 90,000 members – but the influence and impact is much greater through literature and international links.

P. L. Kyōdan 'Perfect Liberty Association'; founded by Tokuharu Miki in 1926 as 'Hito no Michi' under the influence of sectarian Shinto, but the movement was suppressed in 1937, and revived in 1946 as P.L. It worships the 'supreme spirit of the universe' and also stresses the place of ancestral spirits in the lives of believers, as their lives and deeds are part of the *karma* that determines present life. The movement stresses the motto, 'Life is Art', and is highly activist in consequence. Being is known in activity. Its headquarters near Osaka comprise a number of golf courses, a pottery kiln, a school, a small hospital and an athletic centre apart from their main Worship Hall and memorial shrines. The teaching tends to be syncretistic – with the underlying presuppositions pantheistic rather than monotheistic. The believers are reckoned to number almost one million.

Reiyūkai 'Soul Friend Association'; derived largely from Nichiren Buddhism, and so stresses the Lotus Sutra in its teaching, but there is also emphasis on filial piety (the primary obligation) and so a duty towards ancestors. The deeds of their descendants affect the status of the ancestors. The movement was founded by Kakutaro Kubo in 1925, and is the parent-body of a number of splinter groups. There has been emphasis on social action on the part of members, who are said to number close to three and a half million (many of whom still maintain their affiliation with regular Buddhist sects and even Shinto shrines). There is a strong lay emphasis and so few churches.

Risshōkōseikai 'Society for the Establishment of Righteous and Friendly Intercourse'; separated from Reiyūkai, and is one of the most vigorous of the New Religions – with

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almost one and a half million members. Unlike Reiyūkai, it has many thousands of trained teachers and has established many branches. Its doctrine is based upon the Lotus Sutra and gives great importance to the Nichiren Mandala. It first broke away from Reiyūkai in 1938, but its phenomenal advance has been since 1951.

Seichō no Ie 'House of Growth'; a syncretistic form of mental science, which is similar to Christian Science in a number of ways. It was founded in 1934, and makes extensive use of literature. One of the books of the founder (Masaharu Taniguchi) called 'the True Basis of Life' has sold more than eight million copies. All men are accounted to be spiritual sons of God, and the realization of that fact leads to infinite possibilities. The founder was formerly on the staff of Ōmoto, and his doctrines reflect much of his Ōmoto background. Extensive use of faith healing is made, and cures of cancer are particularly cited. As in the case of other of the New Religions, there is the declared aim of establishing on earth 'the Heaven of Mutual Love and Assistance'. Members number about one and a half million, but many of these are simply subscribers to Seichō no Ie literature.

Sekaikyūseikyō 'World Messianic Church'; founded by Mokichi Okada, who had been a member of Ōmoto. The teaching reflects the syncretism already within Ōmoto. The founder claimed to have been sent to this world to remove illness, poverty and strife from the human scene, and to establish an 'earthly paradise'. The teaching includes an emphasis on conformity to nature and the importance of beauty, whether natural or man-created. Members number about 400,000.

Sōka Gakkai 'Creative-Value Study Society'; a fanatical society linked with the Nichiren Shoshu branch of Nichiren Buddhism, and uses coercive methods to gain converts. It was started in 1930 by Jōzaburo Makiguchi, but was

suppressed during the war years – to be revived in 1947. Its main growth has been since 1953, and it now claims more than one million households. It has nine members in the Japanese Senate (the Upper House), and has strong support amongst the working classes.

Tenrikyō 'The Religion of Heavenly Wisdom'; founded by Miki Nakayama as the result of her 'possession' in 1838, but only given free propagation after her death in 1887, and registered as a Shinto Sect in 1908. It is the most highly organized of the New Religions, and has over 10,000 churches and more than two million members – besides being the wealthiest religious organization. The believers believe that the human family is derived from Tenri, and the main sanctuary is built about the 'centre of the world'. It is there that the heavenly dew will descend, and the new age dawn. Believers look forward to living about the central pillar of creation, and even now make pilgrimage to the home, where hovers the gracious spirit of the foundress, and where they are conscious of the favour of Tenri-Ō-no-mikoto, the deity in Tenri. Tenri emphasizes social activity and *hinokishin* (works of a voluntary character); it has a University, Library and museum, and has always been actively missionary, training many thousands of teachers and missionaries.

Tenshō-kōtai-jingu-kyō 'The Teaching of the Heaven-Shining Great Deity-Dwelling'; was founded by a simple peasant woman, Sayo Kitamura in 1942, and is commonly called the 'Dancing Religion' (because ecstatic dancing is part of its worship). Mrs Kitamura chants her messages under the influence of possession, and is called *Ōgamisama* (the Great God). She is regarded as the successor of the Buddha and the Christ. Her message is simple and direct; men must 'polish their souls' and through selfless practice and true repentance realize heaven upon earth. There are about 130,000 members.

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Other Japanese Terms

- Bunke** 'Branch house' – derived from the Japanese family system, where the main family unit (*Honke*) has the direction, but junior branches are also established. In business, it refers to a subsidiary company.
- Buraku** A 'block' or socio-geographical unit. Used of the division of a village. The word is also used to describe the ghetto, where a community of *Eta* lives.
- Bushido** 'The Way of the Warrior' – used to describe the particular ethical behaviour of the *Samurai* class. Its influence, however, was much more widespread. Its roots were in Confucianism.
- Daimyō** Literally 'great name' – the title given to the Feudal Lords who had local autonomy during the period of the *Shogunate*.
- Eta** The name given to the lowest class during the Tokugawa Period. Their status was similar to the Indian Outcast's. Legally united with the *heimin* at the Meiji Restoration, but still socially unacceptable to the rest of the community.
- Genkan** The entrance to a Japanese house.
- Gimu** 'Duty' which is derived from ultimate moral considerations or from ultimate loyalties.
- Giri** 'Obligation' which arises from relationships and the receiving of *on* from others, necessitating an *ongaeshi* (a reciprocal return suitable for the *on* received).
- Heimin** 'The common people' – the lowest classified group of people during the Tokugawa Period.
- Honke** The 'main house' – the senior branch of a family in the *Dōzokudan* system.
- Kobun** 'The part of the child' – used of the analogous parent-child relationship in business and society. An employee may have this relationship to an employer, or a new employee to a senior work-mate. The relationship creates obligations, which must be fulfilled.

Japan's Religious Ferment

Kyōdan 'An association' – commonly used of a religious organization.

Mukyōkai 'Non-Church' – refers to movement begun by Kanzo Uchimura.

On 'Favour' – used particularly of the favour received from a superior, involving the duty of making due reciprocation. An intolerable situation arises, where 'favour' is shown for which no due return is possible.

Oyabun 'The part of a parent' – refers to the superior's position over against the *kobun* – with the *oyabun* taking a parent's responsibility for the young employee.

Oyako 'Parent and child' – refers to the joint Oyabun-Kobun relationship.

Samurai 'Warrior' – attached to a Daimyō, for whom he was expected to demonstrate loyalty to the death. Only the warrior class were entitled to carry swords during the Tokugawa Period.

Shizoku 'A clan' or 'a family' – now used mainly of the family system, but the word indicates the original clan pattern – with the loyalties within the clan and to the *ujigami*.

Shōgun 'Military commander' – during the feudal period supposedly acted on behalf of the Emperor, but, in actual fact, was the real source of power and authority.

Ujigami 'The Kami of the clan.'

Ujiko 'Clan member' – a child of the '*ujigami*'. It is also used to describe the 'parishioners' of a local Shinto shrine.

Short Book-List

Because of the large number of religions involved, and the extent of literature available, this list can claim to be nothing more than an indication of some of the materials available in English, which the writer himself has found of value. Many of the books (indicated by an asterisk) contain valuable bibliographies.

A. *General Books on Japanese Religion or Japan's Cultural Background*

Anesaki, M., *History of Japanese Religion*, London, Kegan Paul, 1930.

This is still the best work of a comprehensive nature, and is written 'with special reference to the Social and Moral Life of the Nation'. The writer, a Buddhist, belonged to the liberal school and established the Department for the Study of Religion at Tokyo University.

Benedict, R., *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, Houghton, 1947.

This work by an eminent anthropologist sought to analyse the mainspring of Japanese character, and ably shows how a variety of traditions and concepts have been fused together to create a remarkable uniformity of procedure.

Bunce, W. K., ed., *Religions in Japan*, Tokyo, Tuttle, 1956.

This was a report drawn up during the Occupation, and contains both a useful, though brief, historical survey, and a good analysis of the immediate post-war religious situation.

Kishimoto, H., ed., *Japanese Religion in the Meiji Era*, Tokyo, Obunsha, 1956.

Japan's Religious Ferment

This volume is the product of research carried on at Tokyo University, and is indispensable as background reading for modern Japan – even though the book tends to be somewhat bitty and epigrammatic.

Maraini, F., *Meeting with Japan*, Viking, 1959.

A reliable guide to the Japan of today, in which the cultural confusion is well depicted.

McFarland, H. Neill, 'The non-Christian religions', *The Japan Christian Year Book 1957*, pp. 72–88 (Tokyo, Kyobunkan, 1957).

An excellent survey of the present-day religious scene, showing both preciseness and shrewdness of judgement.

Nitobe, I., *Bushido, The Soul of Japan*, New York, Putnam, 1905.

A sympathetic study of traditional Samurai ethics by a Japanese Christian writer.

Reischauer, E. D., *Japan, Past and Present*, New York, A. A. Knopf, 1946.

Sansom, G. B., *A Cultural History of Japan*, Appleton, rev. ed., 1943.*

Sansom, G. B., *The Western World and Japan*, Knopf, 1950.*

Sansom, G. B., *A History of Japan from 1334*, Stanford, 1958.*

Three works by an expert in the field of Japanese Studies. Though written from a different standpoint, the works give due place to religion in Japan – but the sociological aspects of religion are those particularly stressed.

B. Shinto

Aston, W. G., *Shinto, the Way of the Gods*, London, Longmans, 1905.

Still an indispensable mine of information about Shinto practice – but fails to see that Shinto is something more than a mere primitive survival. The volume belongs to the

Short Book-List

time when the older non-Christian faiths were thought to be completely moribund.

Aston, W. G., *Shinto, The Ancient Religion of Japan*, London, A. Constable and Co., 1907.

A brief survey of traditional Shinto beliefs.

Aston, W. G., *Nihongi*, London, Allen and Unwin, 1956.

A reprint of an excellent translation of one of Japan's oldest literary documents, containing Shinto mythology.

Fujisawa, C., *Concrete Universality of the Japanese Way of Thinking*, Tokyo, Hokuseido Press, 1958.

An interesting attempt to interpret Shinto for the modern world by an avowed adherent of Shinto. The approach is not widely accepted in Japan.

Holtom, D. C., *The National Faith of Japan*, London, Kegan Paul, 1938.*

By far the best book in English on the subject; especially valuable on the Shinto Sects.

Kato, G., *A Study of Shinto*, Tokyo, Meiji Japan Society, 1926.*

Kato, G., *What is Shinto?*, Tokyo, Maruzen, 1935.

Two works which counter Aston's antiquarian approach to Shinto, and which explain the cultural aspects of the religion.

Ponsonby-Fane, R., *Studies in Shintō and Shrines*, Kyoto, Ponsonby Memorial Society, 1957.

An erudite, if unscientific study, which has a host of detail on the actual religious practices, folk lore and mythology, which make up Shinto.

C. Japanese Buddhism

Callaway, T. N., *Japanese Buddhism and Christianity*, Tokyo, Tuttle, 1958.*

Compares the Christian Doctrine of Salvation with the ideas of three major Buddhist sects in Japan, but fails to indicate the differences between Buddhist theory and

Japan's Religious Ferment

popular religious consciousness, and expects Buddhism to fit in with Christian categories. Nonetheless, a very valuable study and most suggestive.

Eliot, C., *Japanese Buddhism*, 3rd ed., Barnes and Noble, 1959.*

The most authoritative work in English; being posthumous, it is incomplete in parts.

Lloyd, A., *The Creed of Half Japan*, London, Smith, Elder and Co., 1911.

Contains much fanciful speculation about the links of Chinese Buddhism and Nestorian Christianity, but is reliable and helpful when it deals with the rise of the Buddhist sects in Japan.

Masutani, F., *A Comparative Study of Buddhism and Christianity*, Tokyo, Young East Association, 1957.

An interesting study by a Buddhist scholar of the Jōdo sect – but tends to interpret Christianity through the medium of liberal Protestantism and to present an academic, rather than a living, Buddhism.

Otani, K., *Sermons on Shin Buddhism*, Kyoto, Hompa Hongwanji Press, 1957.

Extremely valuable as a guide to the way in which at least one form of Japanese Buddhism is popularly presented.

Pratt, J. B., *The Pilgrimage of Buddhism*, London and New York, Macmillan, 1928.*

Covers the whole field of Asiatic Buddhism, but has a very full section on Japan, and gives a good portrayal of official Buddhism of 35 years ago.

Sasaki, Ruth F., *Zen: A Religion*, New York, The First Zen Institute of America, 1958.

The author, a priestess in a Kyoto Temple, gives an interesting, though somewhat individualistic, interpretation of Zen, emphasizing its religious significance.

Suzuki, B. E. L., *Impressions of Mahayana Buddhism*, Macmillan, 1959.

Short Book-List

Being but a posthumous collection of writings, the book lacks unity – but is particularly valuable for its presentation of the Shingon sect.

Suzuki, D. T., *A Miscellany on the Shin Teaching of Buddhism*, Kyoto, Shinshu Otaniha, 1949.

Suzuki, D. T., *Zen Buddhism*, New York, Doubleday (Anchor Books), 1956.

Suzuki, D. T., *Buddhist Philosophy and its influence on the life and thought of the Japanese people*, Tokyo, Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai, 1936.

A selection of books by an aged Buddhist scholar of world-wide renown. His life work has been the interpretation of Japanese Buddhism to the western world, and he has done much to popularize Zen. Other Japanese scholars tend to be suspicious of his generalizations!

Tamura, Y., ed., *Living Buddhism in Japan*, Tokyo, International Institute for the Study of Religions, 1959.

A slight, and yet very important, report of interviews with ten Japanese Buddhist leaders, who were asked specific questions relating to life, death, faith, sin, etc.

D. Christianity in Japan

Boxer, C. R., *The Christian Century in Japan 1549–1650*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1951.*

By far the best study on the Roman Catholic Missions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Cary, F., 'History of Christianity in Japan (1859–1908)', *The Japan Christian Year Book 1959*, pp. 85–491 (Tokyo, Kyobunkan, 1959).

An interesting collection of contemporary documents and articles, illustrating the first fifty years of Protestant missionary work.

Igglehart, C. W., *A Century of Protestant Christianity in Japan*, Tokyo, Tuttle, 1959.

A comprehensive survey of the achievements and weak-

Japan's Religious Ferment

nesses of the Protestant missionary work from 1859 to 1959; especially valuable for the period immediately before the war.

Jennings, R. P., *Jesus, Japan and Kanzo Uchimura*, Tokyo, Kyobunkan, 1958.*

A very readable introduction to non-Church Christianity in Japan.

E. The New Religions

(Reference should be made to *Bibliography on the New Religions*, Kyoto, Christian Center for the Study of Japanese Religions, 1960.)

Hepner, C. W., *The Kurozumikyo Sect of Shinto*, Tokyo, 1935.*

Van Strahlen, H., *The Religion of Divine Wisdom*, Kyoto, Veritas Shoin, 1957.*

These studies on two of the Shinto sects are pioneer works in the field of the New Religions, and both illustrate the situation which has brought the New Religions into being.

Thomsen, H., *Japan's New Religions*, London, 1959 (article in *International Review of Missions*, July 1959).

A brief, but interesting, introduction to post-war developments in the New Religions.

F. Christianity and other Religions

Bouquet, A. C., *The Christian Faith and non-Christian Religions*, Harper, 1959.

A well-documented work, although not always up-to-date in its information; is chiefly valuable for its presentation of a variety of theological standpoints and interpretations of the relationship of the Christian Gospel with non-Christian religions.

Cragg, K., *Sandals at the Mosque*, Oxford University Press, 1960.

Short Book-List

Examines the relationship of Christianity with, Islam with magnificent sensitivity and theological grasp.

Hocking, W. E., *Living Religions and a World Faith*, London, Allen and Unwin, 1940.

Adopts a somewhat comprehensive attitude towards other religions.

Hocking, W. E., ed., *Rethinking Missions*, New York, Harper, 1933.

Kraemer, Hendrick, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, Kregel, 1938.

Kraemer, Hendrick, *Religion and the Christian Faith*, Westminster Press, 1957.*

Kraemer, Hendrick, *World Cultures and World Religions*, London, Lutterworth Press, 1960.*

Kraemer's books cannot be neglected. They present forcibly the uniqueness of the Christian message, although the second book shows a modification of the strict view of non-continuity held in the first. The third volume presents the importance of dialogue. The wide scope of the volumes means occasional inaccuracy in detail.

Smart, N., *A Dialogue of Religions*, London, SCM Press, 1960.

An attempt to bring together the fundamental concepts of major religions – to understand rather than to judge. The 'Japanese Buddhist' is somewhat composite, although basically Jōdo Shinshu.

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